

CYD

# THE CYPRUS DOSSIER

## ISSUE °05: COLLABO-NATION

SYNERGY  
TEAMWORK  
COOPERATION  
UNITY

Συnergie  
Ομαδικότητα  
Συνεργασία  
Ενότητα

HARMONY  
LEAGUE  
COEXISTENCE  
COMMUNITY

Αρμονία  
Κοινό Πνεύμα  
Συνύπαρξη  
Κοινότητα

PARTICIPATION  
COMMONS  
FELLOWSHIP  
RESPECT

Συμμετοχή  
Κοινό  
Αδελφoσύνη  
Σεβασμός

PARTNERSHIP  
CO-ACTION  
COALITION  
ALLIANCE

Συναιτερισμός  
Σύνδραση  
Συνασπισμός  
Συμμαχία

# THE CYPRUS

# TOG

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VENCEREMOS! – Θα Νικήσουμε!

An intellectual journal with one intention, to initiate frequent cross-disciplinary dialogue on political, social and cultural issues faced by the island's inhabitants, as diversely and impartially as possible.

## Collabo–Nation

Third year – May 2013  
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## Editorial

by — Peter Eramian

[Eng]

Let’s not kid ourselves. We’ve dug a hole and this time it’s a deep one. As the isolation tightens we begin to feel our breaths crossing. Our proximities to each other become narrower and narrower. We feel discomfort. Our ‘I’ is violated, nay contaminated, by the filthy ‘you’. How dare you cross into my territory? Don’t touch me! Do you know who I am? It’s your fault we’re in this hole in the first place! Anxiety and claustrophobia hit. We panic. Violence kicks in. Every strike deepens the hole. The stench of sweat and blood becomes unbearably suffocating. Our immune systems break, our pride shatters. We begin to throw up, everywhere and on each other. Everything we once thought we were – ‘civilised’, ‘proud’, ‘special’ – is expelled, our innards emptied. We lay exhausted, a bloody mess, in pitch dark. Every breath a sacred whisper. Suddenly, next to me, I sense your movement. You reach out, gently, and kindly embrace me. I can’t see you; I can’t tell where you’re from, who you are or what you’re thinking. But I don’t care, I trust you. Your warmth forgives me. I forgive you. I am nobody. I am you. Uncontrollably, I begin to weep in your arms. We’ve dug a hole and this time it’s a deep one. But we’ve found each other. We’re in this hole together. I love you. Now let’s start climbing.

[Grk]

Ας μην ξεגעλιόμαστε. Σκάψαμε μια τρύπα και αυτή τη φορά είναι πολύ βαθιά. Όσο μεγαλώνει η απομόνωσή μας, τόσο περισσότερο νιώθουμε τις αναπνοές μας να διασταυρώνονται. Ο χώρος μεταξύ μας ολοένα και στενεύει. Νιώθουμε δυσφορία. Το “εγώ” μας παραβιάζεται, μολύνεται από το βρώμικο “εσύ”. Πώς τολμάς να παραβαίνεις την περιοχή μου; Μην με αγίζεις. Ξέρεις ποιος είμαι εγώ; Εσύ φταις που βρισκόμαστε σε αυτή την κατάσταση. Το άγχος και η κλειστοφοβία κάνουν αισθητή την παρουσία τους. Πανικοβαλόμαστε. Γινόμαστε βίαιοι. Κάθε κτύπημα βαθαίνει την τρύπα. Η βρώμα του αίματος και του ιδρώτα γίνεται αναπάντεχα ασφυκτική. Το ανοσοποιητικό μας σύστημα καταρρέει, η περηνφάνια μας γίνεται θρύψαλα. Κάνουμε εμετό πάνω μας, πάνω στους άλλους. Εκείνο που νομίζαμε πως ήμασταν - “πολιτισμένοι”, “περήφανοι”, “ξεχωριστοί” - αποβάλλεται μαζί με τα εντόσθιά μας. Κειτόμαστε στο

έδαφος εξουθενωμένοι, μια αγνώριστη σορός στο σκοτάδι. Κάθε αναπνοή κι ένας ιερός ψίθυρος. Ξαφνικά νιώθω τις κινήσεις σου. Με απαλότητα και καλοσύνη, απλώνεις τα χέρια σου για να με αγγίξεις. Δεν μπορώ να σε δω. Δεν ξέρω από πού είσαι, ποιός είσαι ή τι σκέφτεσαι. Δεν με ενδιαφέρει. Σε εμπιστεύομαι. Η ζεστασιά σου με συγχωρεί. Σε συγχωρώ. Δεν είμαι κανένας. Είμαι εσύ. Μέσα στην αγκαλιά σου αρχίζω να κλαίω ανεξέλεγχτα. Σκάψαμε μια τρύπα και αυτή τη φορά είναι πολύ βαθιά. Αλλά βρήκαμε ο ένας τον άλλο. Σε αυτή την τρύπα είμαστε εσύ κι εγώ. Σε αγαπώ. Τώρα ας αρχίσουμε το σκαρφάλωμα.

## CYD & 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale Collaboration

[Eng]

This special issue of CYD has been created to celebrate the participation of Cyprus in the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (1 June — 24 November 2013). This year, Cyprus will be collaborating with Lithuania on a joint exhibition project of two distinct national pavilions, curated by Raimundas Malašauskas. The project, entitled Oo, is being developed by Malašauskas as a large-scale show to feature Cypriot and Lithuanian artists, as well as contributions by a number of international artists.

Oo is being conceptualised as a sequencer, generating a succession of artistic events and appearances dealing with technologies of time, body and subjectivity at large, within the space and outside of it. The project will be housed at Palasport Arsenale, a 1970s modernist building operating as the Venice Municipal Sports Hall.

This unprecedented partnership of two European states aims among others to propose another approach to the ‘national participation’ model, by staging a transnational project that negotiates the notion of contemporary cosmopolitanism in relation to art and society. The collaboration explores warp-holes of time between distinct cultures. An exhibition as grand detail that belongs to a whole, that opens up as a detail within a detail. Oo becomes oO and oo.

Enclosed in this issue is a gift from the Cypriot artists, fragments from their coexisting processes leading up to the exhibition.

Project  
Oo  
(1 June – 15 September 2013)  
Venue  
Palasport Arsenale  
Artists  
Algirdas Šeškus, Constantinos Taliotis, Dexter Sinister (David Reinfurt and Stuart Bailey), Elena Narbutaitė, Gabriel Lester, Gintaras Didžiapetris, Jason Dodge, Kazys Varnelis, Lia Haraki, Liudvikas Buklys, Maria Hassabi, Morten Norbye Halvorsen, Natalie Yiaxi, Phanos Kyriacou, Vytautė Žilinskaitė  
Curator  
Raimundas Malašauskas  
Commissioners  
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Jonas Žakaitis & Aurimė Aleksandravičiūtė (LT)  
Assistant Commissioners  
Angela Skordi & Marika Ioannou (CY)  
Justė Jonutytė (LT)  
Production Manager  
Francesca Bertolotti  
Project Coordinators  
Constantinos Filiotis  
& Roscianach Habibi Minelli  
Graphic Designers  
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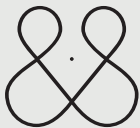
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LAWIN

## The Collaboration Glyph

by — Despina Kannaourou

[Eng]

The collaboration glyph is designed to communicate an ethically charged collaboration, where two people or more come together to work towards an ethical cause. The initial shape, deriving from the Ampersand (&), is mirrored and conjoined to create an uninterrupted path that merges the two sides. This continuity references the mathematical symbol of infinity, implying the infinite possibilities of collaboration. Leaning towards each other, the two sides embrace a central core which symbolizes the ethical cause. The Ampersand symbol is commonly used to replace the word ‘and’. When used between names it often implies a partnership. The collaboration glyph is intended to be used in the same way but with an ethical cause in mind.



Thin



Light



Book



Medium

### DESPINA KANNAOUROU

Despina Kannaourou received a BA in graphic design in 2003 from the Stroganov University in Moscow. In 2007 she received a Masters in Communication Design from Central Saint Martin's (London), where she specialised in typography and information graphics. Since her graduation she worked in London, Castres (France) and Barcelona. She returned to her hometown Limassol in July 2011, where she now works as a freelancer. Working with commercial projects – mainly in the editorial and brand design sectors – she also makes time for self initiated work that allows her to explore such beloved subjects as visualising phonetics and music.

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## Hope in Common

by — David Graeber

[Eng]

Permission to republish has been received from the author. First published in 2009.

We seem to have reached an impasse. Capitalism as we know it appears to be coming apart. But as financial institutions stagger and crumble, there is no obvious alternative. Organized resistance appears scattered and incoherent; the global justice movement a shadow of its former self. There is good reason to believe that, in a generation or so, capitalism will no longer exist: for the simple reason that it's impossible to maintain an engine of perpetual growth forever on a finite planet. Faced with the prospect, the knee-jerk reaction – even of “progressives” – is, often, fear, to cling to capitalism because they simply can't imagine an alternative that wouldn't be even worse.

The first question we should be asking is: How did this happen? Is it normal for human beings to be unable to imagine what a better world would even be like?

Hopelessness isn't natural. It needs to be produced. If we really want to understand this situation, we have to begin by understanding that the last thirty years have seen the construction of a vast bureaucratic apparatus for the creation and maintenance of hopelessness, a kind of giant machine that is designed, first and foremost, to destroy any sense of possible alternative futures. At root is a veritable obsession on the part of the rulers of the world with ensuring that social movements cannot be seen to grow, to flourish, to propose alternatives; that those who challenge existing power arrangements can never, under any circumstances, be perceived to win. To do so requires creating a vast apparatus of armies, prisons, police, various forms of private security firms and police and military intelligence apparatus, propaganda engines of every conceivable variety, most of which do not attack alternatives directly so much as they create a pervasive climate of fear, jingoistic conformity, and simple despair that renders any thought of changing the world seem an idle fantasy. Maintaining this apparatus seems even more important, to exponents of the “free market,” even than maintaining any sort of viable market economy. How else can one explain, for instance, what happened in the former Soviet Union, where one would have imagined the end of the Cold War would have led to the dismantling of the army and KGB and rebuilding the factories, but in fact what happened was precisely the other way

around? This is just one extreme example of what has been happening everywhere. Economically, this apparatus is pure dead weight; all the guns, surveillance cameras, and propaganda engines are extraordinarily expensive and really produce nothing, and as a result, it's dragging the entire capitalist system down with it, and possibly, the earth itself.

The spirals of financialization and endless string of economic bubbles we've been experiencing are a direct result of this apparatus. It's no coincidence that the United States has become both the world's major military (“security”) power and the major promoter of bogus securities. This apparatus exists to shred and pulverize the human imagination, to destroy any possibility of envisioning alternative futures. As a result, the only thing left to imagine is more and more money, and debt spirals entirely out of control. What is debt, after all, but imaginary money whose value can only be realized in the future: future profits, the proceeds of the exploitation of workers not yet born. Finance capital in turn is the buying and selling of these imaginary future profits; and once one assumes that capitalism itself will be around for all eternity, the only kind of economic democracy left to imagine is one where everyone is equally free to invest in the market – to grab their own piece in the game of buying and selling imaginary future profits, even if these profits are to be extracted from themselves. Freedom has become the right to share in the proceeds of one's own permanent enslavement.

And since the bubble had built on the destruction of futures, once it collapsed there appeared to be – at least for the moment – simply nothing left.

The effect however is clearly temporary. If the story of the global justice movement tells us anything it's that the moment there appears to be any sense of an opening, the imagination will immediately spring forth. This is what effectively happened in the late '90s when it looked, for a moment, like we might be moving toward a world at peace. In the US, for the last fifty years, whenever there seems to be any possibility of peace breaking out, the same thing happens: the emergence of a radical social movement dedicated to principles of direct action and participatory democracy, aiming to revolutionize the very meaning of political life. In the late '50s it was the civil rights movement; in the late '70s, the anti-nuclear movement. This time it happened on a planetary scale, and challenged capitalism head-on. These movements tend to be extraordinarily effective. Certainly the global justice movement was. Few realize that one of the main reasons it seemed to flicker in and out of existence so rapidly was that it achieved its principle goals so quickly. None of us dreamed, when we were

organizing the protests in Seattle in 1999 or at the IMF meetings in DC in 2000, that within a mere three or four years, the WTO process would have collapsed, that “free trade” ideologies would be considered almost entirely discredited, that every new trade pact they threw at us – from the MIA to Free Trade Areas of the Americas act – would have been defeated, the World Bank hobbled, the power of the IMF over most of the world's population, effectively destroyed. But this is precisely what happened. The fate of the IMF is particularly startling. Once the terror of the Global South, it is, by now, a shattered remnant of its former self, reviled and discredited, reduced to selling off its gold reserves and desperately searching for a new global mission.

Meanwhile, most of the “third world debt” has simply vanished. All of this was a direct result of a movement that managed to mobilize global resistance so effectively that the reigning institutions were first discredited, and ultimately, that those running governments in Asia and especially Latin America were forced by their own populations to call the bluff of the international financial system. Much of the reason the movement was thrown into confusion was because none of us had really considered we might win.

But of course there's another reason. Nothing terrifies the rulers of the world, and particularly of the United States, as much as the danger of grassroots democracy. Whenever a genuinely democratic movement begins to emerge – particularly, one based on principles of civil disobedience and direct action – the reaction is the same; the government makes immediate concessions (fine, you can have voting rights; no nukes), then starts ratcheting up military tensions abroad. The movement is then forced to transform itself into an anti-war movement; which, pretty much invariably, is far less democratically organized. So the civil rights movement was followed by Vietnam, the anti-nuclear movement by proxy wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua, the global justice movement, by the “War on Terror.”

But at this point, we can see that “war” for what it was: as the flailing and obviously doomed effort of a declining power to make its peculiar combination of bureaucratic war machines and speculative financial capitalism into a permanent global condition. If the rotten architecture collapsed abruptly at the end of 2008, it was at least in part because so much of the work had already been accomplished by a movement that, in the face of the surge of repression after 9/11, combined with confusion over how to follow up its startling initial success, had seemed to have largely disappeared from the scene.

Of course it hasn't really.

We are clearly at the verge of another



mass resurgence of the popular imagination. It shouldn't be that difficult. Most of the elements are already there. The problem is that, our perceptions having been twisted into knots by decades of relentless propaganda, we are no longer able to see them. Consider here the term "communism." Rarely has a term come to be so utterly reviled. The standard line, which we accept more or less unthinkingly, is that communism means state control of the economy, and this is an impossible utopian dream because history has shown it simply "doesn't work." Capitalism, however unpleasant, is thus the only remaining option. But in fact communism really just means any situation where people act according to the principle of "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs" – which is the way pretty much everyone always act if they are working together to get something done. If two people are fixing a pipe and one says "hand me the wrench," the other doesn't say, "and what do I get for it?" (That is, if they actually want it to be fixed.) This is true even if they happen to be employed by Bechtel or Citigroup. They apply principles of communism because it's the only thing that really works. This is also the reason whole cities or countries revert to some form of rough-and-ready communism in the wake of natural disasters, or economic collapse (one might say, in those circumstances, markets and hierarchical chains of command are luxuries they can't afford.) The more creativity is required, the more people have to improvise at a given task, the more egalitarian the resulting form of communism is likely to be: that's why even Republican computer engineers, when trying to innovate new software ideas, tend to form small democratic collectives. It's only when work becomes standardized and boring – as on production lines – that it becomes possible to impose more authoritarian, even fascist forms of communism. But the fact is that even private companies are, internally, organized communistically.

Communism then is already here. The question is how to further democratize it. Capitalism, in turn, is just one possible way of managing communism – and, it has become increasingly clear, rather a disastrous one. Clearly we need to be thinking about a better one: preferably, one that does not quite so systematically set us all at each others' throats.

All this makes it much easier to understand why capitalists are willing to pour such extraordinary resources into the machinery of hopelessness. Capitalism is not just a poor system for managing communism: it has a notorious tendency to periodically come spinning apart. Each time it does, those who profit from it have to convince everyone – and most of all the technical people, the doctors and teachers and surveyors and insurance claims adju-

stors – that there is really no choice but to dutifully paste it all back together again, in something like the original form. This despite the fact that most of those who will end up doing the work of rebuilding the system don't even like it very much, and all have at least the vague suspicion, rooted in their own innumerable experiences of everyday communism, that it really ought to be possible to create a system at least a little less stupid and unfair.

This is why, as the Great Depression showed, the existence of any plausible-seeming alternative – even one so dubious as the Soviet Union in the 1930s – can turn a downswing into an apparently insoluble political crisis.

Those wishing to subvert the system have learned by now, from bitter experience, that we cannot place our faith in states. The last decade has instead seen the development of thousands of forms of mutual aid association, most of which have not even made it onto the radar of the global media. They range from tiny cooperatives and associations to vast anti-capitalist experiments, archipelagos of occupied factories in Paraguay or Argentina or of self-organized tea plantations and fisheries in India, autonomous institutes in Korea, whole insurgent communities in Chiapas or Bolivia, associations of landless peasants, urban squatters, neighbourhood alliances, that spring up pretty much anywhere that state power and global capital seem to temporarily be looking the other way. They might have almost no ideological unity and many are not even aware of the other's existence, but all are marked by a common desire to break with the logic of capital. And in many places, they are beginning to combine. "Economies of solidarity" exist on every continent, in at least eighty different countries. We are at the point where we can begin to perceive the outlines of how these can knit together on a global level, creating new forms of planetary commons to create a genuine insurgent civilization.

Visible alternatives shatter the sense of inevitability, that the system must, necessarily, be patched together in the same form – this is why it became such an imperative of global governance to stamp them out, or, when that's not possible, to ensure that no one knows about them. To become aware of it allows us to see everything we are already doing in a new light. To realize we're all already communists when working on common projects, all already anarchists when we solve problems without recourse to lawyers or police, all revolutionaries when we make something genuinely new.

One might object: a revolution cannot confine itself to this. That's true. In this respect, the great strategic debates are really just beginning. I'll offer one suggestion though. For at least five thousand years, popular movements have tended to centre

on struggles over debt – this was true long before capitalism even existed. There is a reason for this. Debt is the most efficient means ever created to take relations that are fundamentally based on violence and violent inequality and to make them seem right and moral to everyone concerned. When the trick no longer works, everything explodes. As it is now. Clearly, debt has shown itself to be the point of greatest weakness of the system, the point where it spirals out of anyone's control. It also allows endless opportunities for organizing. Some speak of a debtor's strike, or debtor's cartel.

Perhaps so – but at the very least we can start with a pledge against evictions: to pledge, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, to support each other if any of us are to be driven from our homes. The power is not just that to challenge regimes of debt is to challenge the very fiber of capitalism – its moral foundation – now revealed to be a collection of broken promises – but in doing so, to create a new one. A debt after all is only that: a promise, and the present world abounds with promises that have not been kept. One might speak here of the promise made to us by the state; that if we abandon any right to collectively manage our own affairs, we would at least be provided with basic life security. Or of the promise offered by capitalism – that we could live like kings if we were willing to buy stock in our own collective subordination. All of this has come crashing down. What remains is what we are able to promise one another. Directly. Without the mediation of economic and political bureaucracies. The revolution begins by asking: what sort of promises do free men and women make to one another, and how, by making them, do we begin to make another world?

#### DAVID GRAEBER

David Graeber (1961) is an American anthropologist and anarchist who is Reader in Social Anthropology at Goldsmiths, University of London. Graeber has been involved in social and political activism, including the protests against the World Economic Forum in New York City in 2002 and Occupy Wall Street. His most recent book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* has been received with much critical acclaim.

## Coughing out the Law: Perversity and Sociality around an Eating Table

by — Ghassan Joseph Hage

[Eng]

Permission to republish has been received from the author. First published in January, 2013.

It was lunchtime at Sydney's David Jones, Australia's up-market department store chain. So I headed down to the 'food floor'. Whenever I have to shop at DJ's I try to make sure I go there around midday, precisely so I can go down to the food floor and order the exceptionally succulent off-the-bone ham sandwich at the roast carvery section. You can buy it and sit and eat it at a large 'communal' table nearby.

So here I was enjoying my super sandwich with a bottle of mineral water and reading the approaching Sydney Film Festival program when opposite me across the roughly 1.5-meter wide table came and sat an older woman. She seemed in her seventies, well but, conservatively, dressed, and not a single part of her visible self was left to chance: 'tirée à quatre épingles' as the French say. She had a sushi roll in an open plastic container and a bottle of water. She opened a paper serviette on the table in front of her as if to mark a space of her own, and opened her bottle of water, carefully positioning the cap on the serviette. She then opened a sachet of soy sauce, poured it on the sushi roll, and again positioned the sachet very neatly on the serviette. I lost interest and went back to reading about films and eating my sandwich. Not long after, I put my head up as I heard the woman say: 'Excuse me'. There was something unpleasant in the way she said it and I looked behind me to see if she was speaking to someone else. But she kept her eyes on me and said quite loudly: 'No. You.' If there was something mildly unpleasant about the 'excuse me', the 'No. You' was unabashedly aggressive—a spectre of my severe super-ego masquerading as a not-amused Queen Elizabeth-like figure speaking to me with imperial tones floated around. And what it had to say was even less pleasant. To my utter astonishment the woman spoke clearly for everyone on the table to hear: 'Do you mind putting your hand on your mouth when you cough?'

## HEADS TURNED.

To say that I was embarrassed and unhappy would be an understatement. I had coughed. It was 'true', as Fanon said

on that train. And I am not mentioning Fanon because his name came to me by chance. I did feel that I was, for the first time in my life, being subjected to some in-your-face racializing, a 'look Mamma a black man' -Fanon-on-the-train-like situation. For while it was true that I coughed, it was (please, please, please believe me) the mildest of coughs. And what's more, I did (please, please, please believe me) turn my head discreetly away from the table. This woman was picking on me! I was convinced she was trying to create, for her own benefit, a 'First-world-looking civilised person trying to stop third-world-looking guy from polluting the atmosphere in a middle class store'-type scene.

Things happened very fast. Very quickly, instantly, my embarrassment gave way to an aggressive combativeness and, in less than a split second, I knew that anything of the order of: '*I did move my head*', or '*I am quite far away from you*' or '*It was only a mild cough*' would have been a succumbing to the way she had defined the parameters of the situation. It took less than another split second for me to assume a very unaffected but nonetheless combative and ready-for-further-attacks posture. I looked back at her in the eyes and said:

## ‘LOOK, IF YOU ARE OLD AND LONELY, THERE MUST BE BETTER WAYS OF SOCIALIZING’.

And I pretended to be back reading my paper as if I were not concerned at all by what she had said and what had just happened.

Given that I had firmly fixed an image of her in my mind as an aggressive kind of woman, I was also ready for her to make some vicious riposte, and I was already preparing to rip into her again. But, when I looked up, to my astonishment, I realised that she was now quietly crying.

Now, I was embarrassed in a completely different way. And while, before, everyone on the table was looking at me with a degree of uncertainty trying to figure out 'what a man who coughs without putting his hand on his mouth looks like', now everyone was looking at me as 'the little monster who made the old lady cry'. It's 'true', Fanon would have said.

Suddenly, I was occupying a space of vacillation. First, I was no longer so sure that this was all about racism. While the manner the woman addressed me was clearly unacceptable, there was room to doubt whether she intended to racialize me. Have I not done here what I have often warned my 'antiracism' students against doing: just because there is a history of racialization does not mean anyone who

shows aggression in an inter-racial context is by necessity racializing. Anti-racism is very much a child of the Marx, Nietzsche, Freud tradition of critique that Ricoeur has called the hermeneutic of suspicion. And as Eve Sedgwick wonderfully put it: it is a tradition governed by the injunction 'you can never be *paranoid enough*' (2003: 127).

There is a possibility that the woman was racializing me, but there is a possibility that she wasn't. It could well be the case that she was just being a nuisance, not necessarily a racist nuisance. So, why did I go for the 'paranoid' racist option, which probably intensified the cruelty of my response? Was it her demeanour that made the ghosts of English colonial history come and nibble my ham sandwich? Or was it me? Researching and thinking too much about racism can make one see racism in its most subtle manifestations. Sedgwick tells us that such lucidity is part of paranoid thinking. But such thinking can also make one see racism where there is nothing racist to see.

One dream I had following the DJ's encounter, and I had quite a few, played out the theme of racism in a particularly funny way, that probably also reveals an unsavoury part of my Christian Middle Eastern unconscious. I was holding the sandwich and looking at the woman who was no longer recognizable and trying to explain to her the significance of the fact that what I was eating was a ham sandwich: 'Hello...*can't you see this is a... HAM...sandwich*' (I was not actually saying it but inviting her to realise what I was thinking). The dream's assumption was that all racism was anti-Muslim racism and that the lady should have realised she was making a category mistake.

Despite its ridiculousness, the dream was an invitation to go back and concentrate on the original scene. How could I try to further understand what had happened on that day if I were not to go back to the original reason I had been there in the first place: to enjoy a ham sandwich?

I really enjoy those ham sandwiches. Deep down, I am perhaps a bit embarrassed, but only a bit, by the degree to which I enjoy good food. In Paris, when I was a guest of Pierre Bourdieu as a post-doc, if I had to choose between a Bourdieu lecture and an invitation to a good restaurant, I've never failed to choose the latter. The jouissance I derive from the libidinal, particularistic and one-to-one relation between me and the food I am eating is an important fantasy space for me. A pre-oedipal fantasy space a Freudian might say, which could explain the aggression directed at those who puncture the fantasy with unwanted comments and interactions. So, there was room for ambivalence: maybe this had nothing to do with racism and all about my shameful food fantasies.

But there was also another source of

ambivalence. When I saw the woman crying, I was convinced, rightly or wrongly, that I had hit the nail on the head: she clearly did feel old and lonely. So, faced with an ‘old and lonely’ woman in tears, part of me wanted to forget everything and just apologise, but part of me was still reeling from the ‘put your hand on your mouth’ bullying and didn’t want to apologise at all. In the end, I didn’t find it in me to do so. Even at that time, letting the lady cry without apologising seemed cruel, especially since I was already being ambivalent about whether she was a racist old lady or not. Yet, I couldn’t let go of my cruelty. Indeed, I would go as far as saying that, for a moment there, I was enjoying my cruelty. But I was also scared of myself for feeling this way. Thus, I was clearly occupying a space of vacillation, or ambivalence as Freud would say. If little Hans’ ambivalence classically exhibited itself in the way he both feared his father and feared for his father (Freud 1909), there was something classical about my ambivalence towards my cruelty: I feared it and I feared for it to. I was scared of it: scared that it would take over me and transform me from someone who enjoyed a moment of cruelty into someone cruel. And yet, there was no doubt that I was enjoying it. It provided me with a scene which, at a time when I felt threatened, allowed me to stage myself in a viable manner.

So this was how it all ended. I was ambivalent about the lady’s rudeness and racism, ambivalent about the cruelty I exhibited and ambivalent about myself for liking it. With the woman drying her tears (someone actually gave her a tissue) and people still looking at me, I was increasingly finding both the situation I was in, and myself, unbearable. I picked up what was left of my sandwich and my bottle of water and angrily got up and left.

It was a memorable sandwich-eating session and, understandably, I kept replaying in my head what had happened for a very long time. While I will never be certain that the woman cried because she was confronted with her loneliness by my comments, I kept thinking about the likelihood that she was. By chance, this raised issues concerning the nature of sociality, right-based entitlement and the law that I have been examining in my ethnographic work with the Lebanese diaspora. In one piece I am writing, I look at youngish cosmopolitan Lebanese from London, Paris, New York and Montréal, who enjoy going back to Lebanon to experience a sense of freedom from being straightjacketed by excessive laws and regulations in all aspects of their lives, the latter being part of their experience of living in the West. The analysis brings to the fore questions concerning the role of the law in mediating social relations: while the law makes social relations possible, is there a point where society can be said to have ‘too

many laws’? At the heart of the matter are three issues, all of which have a bearing on the DJ’s incident:

1. The first issue has to do with the difficulties emanating from the way the law ‘individualises’ and, in so doing, favours a form of public togetherness that does not threaten to dissolve individual sovereignties.

Social and philosophical critiques of modernity and capitalism, since Rousseau, Hegel and Marx have often enough lamented the processes of individuation to which people are subjected in western societies. Sartre famously called this social and yet individuated existence *la série*, which to him was a kind of fundamental state of alienated sociality. One is struck, for example, by how different the usage of public space is for working and under-class people in Beirut and in Sydney. While people in Beirut go to such public spaces to interact with the public, in Sydney, when people go to parks and beaches, they often go to claim a bit of public space as their own. This is hardly restricted to the under- or working classes though. I live in a milieu of people who are all militantly committed to public spaces. Yet, whenever we go to a park or the beach, I often hear people say: ‘let’s find a place where there aren’t too many people’. People spread their blanket, not only for comfort, but also as a mode of claiming public space as one’s own, a space where others should not thread, for the duration of its usage. A similar spirit seems to animate the woman at DJ’s in the way she spread her serviette on the ‘communal’/public eating table.

2. In so far as the law creates a relationality between people, it is a relationality of subjects who have been abstracted from their particularity by virtue of their being the subjects of national laws: citizens – which, as is well known, is what allows them to be ‘all equal before the law’.

Here, the law always seems to stage a tension between the libidinal and the abstract, the particular and the universal, dimensions of people. What makes a public eating space so interesting is that it is a public space which encourages the kind of abstract subjectivities referred to above and yet, it is also an eating place where our bodily self, and indeed our libidinality is heavily manifested. As such, to eat on a public table is to continuously aim to negotiate the libidinal and legal/abstract self. While one is deploying one’s

own libidinal self to enjoy the food, one is deploying the legal self to protect oneself from one’s own libidinality as well as the libidinality of others—such as claiming the right not to be coughed at. This leads directly to the final point/issue.

3. There is always a threshold whereby certain laws designed to protect citizens and facilitate sociality become excessively protective such as to become a hindrance to sociality.

This is highlighted in the classical Zizekian tale of the black, fat lesbian, non-smoking female office worker: the law protects her against racism, sexism, weight discrimination, homophobia, and smoking, tells us Zizek, but... no one in the office talks to her.

Following Lauren Berlant (2011), one could argue that there is an embryonic structure of ‘cruel optimism’ that is at the heart of the law: it opens a space that both optimistically enhances and cruelly hinders the possibility of sociality. How much cruelty and how much optimism changes from one social and historical setting to another. It depends on what socio-legal structures of sociality a particular formation has to offer. But it also depends on the subject’s capacity to squeeze different kinds of socialities out of given situations. At one level, the woman at DJ’s seems to be an unreflexive enactor of an alienated form of seriality: happy with her individuality, happy with her sovereignty that can afford her the space of a serviette on a public table, happy to protect the sanctity of her abstract self in the face of the cough/libidinality of the other. At another level, however, her bullying reveals her to be a strategist – an unhappy and desperate strategist, but a strategist nonetheless – aiming to position herself out of the impasse of solitude and a-sociality in which the social world has located her. Seen in this light, her ‘don’t cough on me’, rather than, or perhaps along with, being the expression of a further desire for protection from any interaction with others, was also in fact an expression of the opposite: a desire for sociality in a space where sociality was at its minimum. As always with repressive structures, one ends up with sexuality and libidinality in both the repression and the transgression. Michael Taussig has shown us in his work, via Bataille, how there is ‘a certain sexual quality of the law and of breaking the law, the beauty and libidinality of transgression’ (1992: 124). ‘Don’t cough on me’ can conjure up the libidinal just as much as it represses it, while also simultaneously being a rejection and an invitation to sociality.

As Marshall Sahlins reminds us in his

comparison between Hobbes and Mauss, anthropology has amply shown us that sociality does not have to be the product of sharing subjection to a common law. It can also be ensured by exchange and reciprocity. A good example, of clear relevance to us here, is Claude Levi-Strauss’s famous portrayal of wine exchange on the eating tables of southern France (1969). Even where sociality is largely regulated within a space of legality, there is always another sociality regulated by reciprocity and exchange. While people certainly do not exchange their drinks on today’s public eating tables (which are actually becoming popular again in many restaurants and cafés), people, nonetheless, do exchange small talk (if only in the form of what Malinowski (1924) called ‘phatic communication’). Somehow, perhaps because it is an eating table at a department store where eating subjects are already individualised by their experience as consumers, DJ’s table is, on the whole, free from even such brief and light chit-chat. It is from this perspective that the woman’s bullying can be, within the social space of exchange and reciprocity, an offering made with the only shareable means of relationality left to her, taken from the space of legality: the assertion of her entitlement to be free of bodily relationality. It is an ambivalent kind of offering but an offering nonetheless: “telling you ‘don’t interact with me’ is the only thing left for me to offer as a means to interact with you and squeeze a bit of sociality from such a sociality-free situation”. She was still snatching a bit of optimism at the very place where society was at its cruellest as it were.

In that, she still had it in her to try and socialise, even by offering such a perverse gift, as it were, perhaps she was revealing herself to be less alienated and accepting of the a-social régime that everyone else on the table that day, including myself, had happily accepted. For while, at another level, I have stressed her acceptance of the alienated régime of sovereign individuality in the way she delineated a bit of her personal space with her serviette, was I not myself, even more happily, but less visibly, doing the same by forming a closed circle between myself, my ham sandwich, my bottle of water and my Sydney Film Festival program?

Despite her objectionable behaviour, she was perhaps the radical one on the table, unaccepting of existing forms of un-sociality and still hoping for the possibility for some other form of relationality.

And it could well be, as my friend and colleague Stephen Muecke suggested, that sociality might have surged at the table after I made, to those seated at the table, the offer of my absence.

GHASSAN JOSEPH HAGE

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## Ecology before Economy: Art after Nature

by — T.J. Demos

[Eng]

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The night sky may never have looked as disturbingly different as it did in *Black Shoals Stock Market Planetarium*, 2001/2004, for which the London-based artists Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway projected an array of otherworldly constellations onto a planetarium-style dome. Each astral body corresponds not to nature but to a publicly traded company, as a computer program translates the real-time financial activity of the world's stock exchanges into glimmering stars. At Tate Britain in 2001, the piece connected to a Reuters news feed; at the Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center in 2004, it was wired to the local stock exchange. Stars flash brightly whenever their stock is traded, gathering into clusters or dispersing according to market momentum. Adding to this celestial panorama of astronomical complexity, the artists introduced digital creatures into the luminous ecosystem. Evolutionary algorithms designed by the artificial-life researcher Cefn Hoile program these creatures to feed on the energy of the stars, growing into complex beings and reproducing in order to better survive in this strange media ecology. When there's a market downturn, they experience famine and die out, overcome by the darkness.

But this extraordinary ecosystem is also, pointedly, devoid of natural life. The title of Autogena and Portway's project puns on the so-called Black-Scholes option-pricing formula, published in 1973 by University of Chicago professors Fischer Black and Myron Scholes, which set the course for the trading of financial derivatives on an unprecedented scale. *Black Shoals Stock Market Planetarium* reduces complex calculations of this kind to the level of a video game's seductive visual logic, whereby the ravenous animals simulate the speculative passions that have led to real-life suffering and disasters.

**AS HOILE SAYS, “THE CREATURES’  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR  
ARTIFICIAL WORLD OF STARS IS A  
MIRROR OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH  
THE FINANCIAL MARKETS — THEY**

**STRIVE TO SURVIVE, COMPETING  
WITH EACH OTHER IN A WORLD  
WHOSE COMPLEXITY THEY ARE TOO  
SIMPLE TO FATHOM.”<sup>1</sup>**

In this regard, *Black Shoals’* creatures are nothing but a purified expression of self-entrepreneurship – approximating what Michel Foucault, in his later writings on biopolitics, called *Homo economicus*, the subject of neoliberalism.<sup>2</sup> The piece is not just a means of visualizing abstract data but an existential model for predatory life under advanced capitalism, within a zone where nothing else – not bodies, social life, religion, or aesthetics – matters. The fact that the “creatures” have repeatedly rendered themselves extinct during the running of the piece proposes that, at its most extreme, the project be taken as a dark allegory – and a stark warning – for our precarious existence as a species whose actions are putting its very viability at risk.<sup>3</sup>

Picturing a life-world merged with capital, Autogena and Portway's starry sky presents the activity of the stock market via a technology of visualization, showing just how artificial the financial system is – and revealing the vulnerability of life exposed to a purely economic rationality. The work thus counters the idea that “the market is in human nature,” a proposition that Fredric Jameson once said “cannot be allowed to stand unchallenged,” arguing that the contestation of this ideology – the idea that the market is our second nature, a given, a biological fact – is “the most crucial terrain of ideological struggle in our time.”<sup>4</sup> Jameson was mostly concerned about the naturalization of finance, but around the same time, coinciding with the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, there emerged the first glimmerings of the inverse of this neoliberal doctrine: the financialization of nature, which threatens to be even more consequential.<sup>5</sup> According to the latter, the environmental crisis is first and foremost an economic crisis to be repaired via economic incentives. Such thinking is what underlies the Kyoto Protocol and subsequent efforts to stem climate change – including last year's UN climate conference in Durban, South Africa – which advocate “carbon market” mechanisms such as cap-and-trade. By marketizing the environment in the form of carbon credits, this system effectively amounts to the selling of the “right” to pollute. As each passing year sets a world record for the emission of greenhouse gases, it becomes all the more urgent to dismantle this logic of naturalization.

Directly addressing this need, Amy Balkin's *Public Smog*, 2004–, proposes a creative modeling of the links between nature and finance. The San Francisco-

based artist's ongoing project, which will be shown this summer at Documenta in Kassel, documents her Sisyphean attempts to set up a clean-air “park” in the atmosphere, one whose dimensions and duration are contingent on the emissions credits the artist purchases and on the length of their contracts. Having acquired the carbon offsets, Balkin, if on a small scale, subverts the cap-and-trade system by withholding the credits from industrial usage. She opened the “Lower Park” above the Coastal Zone of California's South Coast Air Quality Management District during summer 2004; the “Upper Park” existed for a year beginning in December 2006 over the European Union, then again from April to August 2010 over the United States. Balkin also installed a series of thirty billboards across Douala, Cameroon, to announce the possible inauguration of a clear-air park over Africa. A digital slide show on the *Public Smog* website reproduces the financial and legal documents from which these parks derive, including details of letters she wrote to traders to acquire offsets, as well as legal agreements concerning sales. Also included are snippets of conversations with various unidentified bureaucrats relating to Balkin's attempt to register the earth's atmosphere as a Unesco World Heritage site. This aspect of the work raises questions about who is entitled to nominate and enforce such protections, and some of the transcribed responses – such as “Mhm, right. Right, right” – indicate the wall of bureaucracy Balkin ran into. One Francesco Francioni explained to her that “the nomination could be possible only if all parties agreed...that the atmosphere is a part of the general environment of ‘outstanding universal value’ and that its conservation is essential to the conservation of the ‘territorial’ environment of every state” – as if those conclusions were questionable!

The virtuality of the project – a “park” in the air can neither be seen nor exist in any stable state – mirrors the invisibility and abstract quality of atmospheric carbon dioxide and, indeed, of climate change itself. This very invisibility eases the denial of global warming and facilitates its economic manipulation, whose problematic nature Balkin's project seeks to expose. As her website states, “Ultimately, as the logic of privatization points to the commodification of all common pool resources, a reduction model based on trade is contradictory to a socially just solution to global air pollution. We need another model. In the meantime we have *Public Smog*, a way for the global public to buy back the sky on the open market.”<sup>6</sup> Balkin's work thus mimics the financial practice of offsetting as a response to climate change only to reveal its specious logic. Yet in declaring that “*Public Smog* is no substitute for

direct action,” the artist acknowledges that merely drawing attention to the problem is not enough.

That these ideas are taking on greater significance in the art world is evident in the growing number of exhibitions, catalogues, and critical texts dedicated to the topic of art and environment. For instance, the 2007 Sharjah Biennial, titled “Still Life: Art, Ecology and the Politics of Change,” explicitly focused on such practices, filtering them through the Gulf state's many contradictions, including its reliance on a fossil-fuel economy of spectacular real-estate development and its support of a biennial that, even more than most, generates huge costs in terms of flight transportation. Responding to the biennial's broader concerns, Tue Greenfort produced *Exceeding 2 Degrees*, 2007, a work that involved a thermo-hydrograph (which measures both temperature and humidity) installed in the Sharjah Art Museum on a table that had been fabricated from Malaysian wood in Japan before being sold in Dubai. This incarnation of the conditions of globalized production was only one part of Greenfort's modeling of an innovative eco-institutional critique, however: The artist also raised the temperature of the entire museum by two degrees Celsius – the interval set as a plausible but now seemingly unreachable goal in the fight against global warming in the Stern Review, the 2006 British-government-sponsored report (extracts of which were also on view).

Another aspect of Greenfort's work involved using the money saved on air-conditioning to protect an area of rain forest in Ecuador via the Danish environmental organization Nepenthes. Some two square miles of rain forest were purchased for around four hundred dollars. This was hardly presented as a solution – rather, the piece, in an act of critical negation, revealed the daunting complexity of the problem it addressed by entangling itself in its paradoxes. However, although it rescued only a tiny piece of land, Greenfort's work successfully demonstrated the connections, between economic, ecological, and institutional systems. Greenfort's work points to the inherent flaw in the logic of offsetting, which involves trading environmental damage here for protecting nature there. As critics have noted, such thinking fails to take into account the impossibility of exchangeability within biodiversity. Offsetting depends on the theory of biotic and monetary equivalence, which, in seeing nature as a commodity, overlooks the fact that life-forms are embedded in singular knots of local relations, so that a South American rain-forest allotment cannot ultimately substitute for Persian Gulf air quality. Indeed, Greenfort's work echoes the thought of eco-critics such

as Timothy Morton, who has recently proposed that we begin to think of “ecology without nature,” arguing that the very idea of nature has become too ideologically compromised to warrant continued conceptual and aesthetic usage. This doesn't mean, of course, that there isn't an environment filled with life-forms; rather, it insists that “nature” can't be objectified as separate and external, because living and nonliving objects are embedded within a “mesh” of social, political, and phenomenal relations.<sup>7</sup> *Exceeding 2 Degrees*, like *Public Smog*, visualizes all three aspects of this network.

In this regard, these projects stand in marked contrast to the idea of nature in projects by many of the 1970s pioneers of eco-art, which tended to posit nature as a separate realm of purity needing protection from industrial degradation, pollution, and economic exploitation. This defense, however, often had the effect of reifying nature – ironically and problematically paralleling the very objectifications of industry. But figures such as Joseph Beuys, Agnes Denes, Peter Fend, Hans Haacke, Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, and Alan Sonfist nonetheless helped to focus on the representation of often ignored natural sites and processes and, like their contemporary counterparts, addressed ecological issues by visualizing what is normally hidden. Sonfist's *Time Landscape*, 1965–78, is a telling example: The artist returned half a block in New York's Greenwich Village to its precolonial, native condition, protected from surrounding invasive species, urbanization, and development – even if that aim has repeatedly or even continually been challenged by the multiple encroachments of Manhattan's urban life.

Indeed, the impossibility of separating “nature” from human activities is ever more evident as ecology has become further intertwined with economic calculations and legal regulations – and as the industrial domination of nature grows more entrenched, leading to ever more horrific environmental disasters, as well as climate change. Many ecologists and atmospheric scientists argue that we now live in the anthropocene era, when human activity has become the central driver of the planet's geologic changes.<sup>8</sup> The Indian scientist and environmental activist Vandana Shiva has defined a further challenge to the concept of the natural: “the corporate control of life”<sup>9</sup> by means of biotechnology and intellectual property law. This represents a new stage in what Shiva, after eco-feminist Carolyn Merchant, calls the “death of nature,” whereby living organisms themselves have come to be seen as “man-made” phenomena, stripped of their autonomous, self-organizing capacity. It is here that groups such as the Critical Art Ensemble

have staged important interventions, with projects such as *Free Range Grain*, 2003–2004 (a work made in collaboration with Beatriz da Costa and Shyh-shiun Shyu). This mobile laboratory-cum-performance piece traveled around various European art venues, where visitors were invited to bring in store-bought groceries for CAE to test for genetically modified ingredients. The project exposes the slippery space between the European Union's anti-GM regulations and its open markets, which inevitably leave holes for the import of processed foods, especially from the United States, where many corporations have successfully resisted the transparent labeling of GM products. While the piece offered “a means to visualize the material reality of theories of global trade,” as the artists explained, it also demonstrated how scientific detection techniques can be utilized by non-specialists, dramatized by the T-shirt-clad artists appearing behind tables filled with intimidating equipment. Yet such cases also reveal a complication of the postnatural condition: Proponents of non-GM food by necessity maintain a nostalgic belief in the natural and defend it as a sphere in need of protection. Indeed, just as some eco-critics wish to put nature to rest theoretically, environmental activists such as Shiva take recourse to “the rights of nature,” which they have defended in courts of law willing to use “universal jurisdiction” to protect against the encroachments of corporate globalization.<sup>10</sup>

If art cannot match such performative legal action, it can unravel some of the utopian and critical myths on which “the natural” rests. Works such as Greenfort's, CAE's, Balkin's, and Autogena and Portway's use the visualization of environmental, technological, and economic processes as a means of comprehension: In each case, if to varying degrees and with varying emphases, the artist gives shape to abstractions and normally invisible externalities on which both finance and global ecology depend. Yet these visualizations – according to which appearance represents a complex index of institutional determinations, economic machinations, and subjective negotiations – are not simply mimetic but also posit transformations and deformations of the systems they engage. In this sense, the entire endeavor of ecologically minded art presses the age-old question of art and life – the union of which long glimmered in the dreams of the neo-avant-garde – into literally new terrain that is not only social but more specifically biopolitical and eco-financial. Just as nature can no longer be understood as a pristine and discrete realm apart from human activity, art's autonomy is all the more untenable when faced with ecological catastrophe. Or so some artists are now demonstrating, by

going far beyond institutional critique (and the eco-institutional critique of, say, Greenfort’s work) and opting for an explicitly activist and interventionist practice, one that knows there is no Eden, no virgin spring to which we may return.

These agents – perhaps there is no better term – often shun institutional enclosure, privileging the importance of local projects and communities and blurring the distinctions between art and activism. A number of figures successfully straddle these contexts – artists and groups such as Fritz Haeg, Superflex, Marjetica Potrč, Art Not Oil, Allora & Calzadilla, the Yes Men, and the London-based artist Nils Norman, who has focused on producing artistic interventions that promote a model of community-driven ecological sustainability. Norman is best known for his 2001–2004 *Geocruiser* – a refurbished coach running on biodiesel, fitted with solar panels, and containing a community library and a greenhouse. His *Edible Park*, which opened in 2010 in the Binckhorst area of The Hague, serves as a more ambitious and long-term laboratory for sustainable urban planning. Mapped out in working drawings that explain the project’s mixture of agricultural biodiversity, localism, and experimental collectivism, *Edible Park* was conceived in part as a response to a proposal by Rem Koolhaas’s Office for Metropolitan Architecture for a new creative hub for The Hague, which would have included an amusement park and leisure district, a beach, a range of skyscrapers, and a Formula 1 race track – a high-impact, energy-intensive “spontaneous city,” the plans for which were unsurprisingly mothballed following the 2008 financial meltdown. In striking contrast to OMA’s visions of grandeur, Norman’s low-tech “counter ‘master plan’” joined organic agriculture and practices such as rainwater harvesting, forest gardening, and composting to craft his model of eco-communalism and bioregionalism, realized in collaboration with a local group of permaculture activists. Norman also worked with Dutch architect Michel Post to build a central place-making structure, a “round-house” with passive solar front windows and straw-bale construction. The structure’s shape recalls the fantastical modernism of German architect Bruno Taut, who worked closely with landscape architect Leberecht Migge in the 1920s on models for communal, grassroots socialism in the design of Germany’s low-lying housing projects.

More than simple eco-gardening, Norman’s project offers an experimental approach to agro-social construction: a test case in how to think differently about the link between ecology and economy. Norman chose permaculture as a trial system because it unfolds onto inclusive social processes, taking account of local

weather, soil conditions, geography, and collective subsistence farming – all ingredients for a sustainable society.<sup>11</sup> Indebted to historical utopian models of social and economic life, such as 1960s San Francisco anarchist collective the Diggers, Norman’s plan is no less ambitious but infinitely more pragmatic. It is based on the idea that changing the ways energy, food, and site design are organized will in turn alter social organization and economic and distribution systems. Although Norman’s activism here takes place within an art context – Edible Park was sponsored by Stroom Den Haag, a foundation devoted to art and architecture – it is an outdoor, public project that to a considerable degree represents a withdrawal from art-institutional practice. (Conversely, its “artistic” categorization allowed the project to be realized in an area whose zoning restrictions normally preclude agriculture.) In his proposal for the project, Norman asks: “Can a grassroots, biodynamic system that comes out of a utopian tradition operate city-wide, become integrated in the city’s existing planning processes and possibly eventually replace them?” Or, as he continues, “Is this in itself a naive and misplaced utopian idea?” In fact, the naive and misplaced utopian idea would be not to try to think differently – believing against all evidence to the contrary that we can simply continue down our self-destructive path. In this regard, Norman takes up Félix Guattari’s late-1980s plea that we must develop new “‘stock exchanges’ of value” that exit from the domination of “general equivalence,” according to which everything – including nature – becomes a form of currency.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the solutions to the environmental crisis must precede and predetermine economic decisions – not vice versa. For the many artists who have put such issues at the core of their practice, it’s perfectly justifiable to claim, with a nod to Jameson, that in doing so they are occupying “the most crucial terrain of ideological struggle in our time.”

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FOOTNOTES

1. Hoile, C. (2008) ‘Black Shoals: Evolving Organisms in a World of Financial Data’.
2. See Foucault, M. (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, trans. Burchell, G., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, at 226; and Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
3. In fact, some conservation scientists argue that we are in the midst of a “mass extinction event” as a result of human activity. See Jowit, J., ‘Humans Driving Extinction Faster Than Species Can Evolve, Say Experts’, *The Guardian*, Sunday, 7 March, 2010, available at: <http://guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/mar/07/extinction-species-evolve>
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5. See Smith, N. ‘Nature as Accumulation Strategy’, in Panitch, L. and Leys, C., (eds.) (2007) *Coming to Terms with Nature*, ed. Leo Panitch, L. and Leys, C., *Socialist Register* 43, London: Merlin Press, 2007, available at: <http://neil-smith.net/vectors/nature-as-accumulation-strategy>
6. See Amy Balkin’s website (<http://publicsmog.org>), which includes links to critical literature, including Gilbertson, T. and Reyes, O. (2009) *Carbon Trading: How It Works and Why It Fails*, Uppsala, Sweden: Dag Hammarskjöld Centre
7. See Morton, T. (2007) *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and (2010) *The Ecological Thought*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
8. Dipesh Chakrabarty surveys the scientific consensus and points to one historiographic challenge: the imperative to think the deep history of “species history of humans” with the “global histories of capital,” in ‘The Climate of History: Four Theses’, *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2, Winter 2009: esp. 212
9. This is the title of Vandana Shiva’s contribution to Documenta 12’s ‘100 Notes—100 Thoughts’ publication project (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2011).
10. Among the pertinent examples here are the Bolivian 2011 “Law of Mother Earth” and the 2010 Ecuadoran lawsuit against BP following the Deepwater Horizon disaster.
11. See, for instance, ‘Ten Principles for Sustainable Societies’, in Cavanagh, J. and Mander, J. (eds.) (2003) *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible: A Report of the International Forum on Globalization*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, at 77–104.
12. See Guattari, F. (2000) *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Pindar, I. and Sutton, P., London: Athlone Press, at 65

## Chávez and the Future of Chávismo

by — Boaventura De Sousa Santos

[Eng]

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The most charismatic, democratic political leader in decades is dead. Whenever charisma plays a role in a democratic context, it establishes a particularly mobilizing political relationship between rulers and the ruled, as it adds to democratic legitimacy an identity of belonging and a sharing of goals that go way beyond political representation. Well used to being hit by a distant, oppressive power (which tends to thrive in low intensity democracies), the popular classes come to experience a bridging of the gap between the represented and their representatives. Opponents will then speak of populism and authoritarianism, but they will seldom convince any voters. This is because, in a democratic context, charisma allows for levels of democratic civic education that are otherwise very difficult to attain. Such unique chemistry between charisma and democracy tends to strengthen both of these, especially when it brings about measures aimed at the social redistribution of wealth. The problem with charisma is that it ends with the leader.

## IN ORDER TO MOVE ON WITHOUT THE LEADER, DEMOCRACY NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED BY TWO INGREDIENTS WHOSE CHEMISTRY IS EQUALLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN, ESPECIALLY IN A POST-CHARISMATIC PERIOD: INSTITUTIONALITY AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION.

As they shout “We are all Chávez!” in the streets of Caracas, the people are lucidly aware of the fact that there was only one Chávez and that the Bolivarian revolution is bound to have enemies, both internal and external, who are strong enough to challenge the keen democratic experience that he offered them over the course of fourteen years. President Lula of Brazil was also a charismatic leader. President Dilma, who came after him, has built on the strong institutionality of the Brazilian state and Brazilian democracy, but has found it difficult to complement

it with popular participation. Venezuelan institutions are much less strong but, on the other hand, the thrust of participation is much higher there. It is in this context that one must analyse Chávez’s legacy and the challenges ahead.

## CHÁVEZ’S LEGACY

### The redistribution of wealth.

Like other Latin American leaders, Chávez took advantage of the boom in natural resources (mostly oil) to carry out an unprecedented program of social policies –especially in such areas as education, health, housing and infrastructure– that substantially improved the lives of the overwhelming majority of the population. To name a few examples: free compulsory education; literacy campaigns for over a million and a half people, which led UNESCO to declare Venezuela “an illiteracy-free territory”; the reduction of extreme poverty, from 40% in 1996 to 7.3% at present; the reduction of infant mortality, from 25 per 1000 to 13 per 1000 during the same period; popular restaurants for low-income groups; the increase of the minimum wage – which, according to ILO, is now the highest in the region. Thus it was that Saudi Venezuela ceded place to Bolivarian Venezuela.

### Regional integration.

Chávez was the indefatigable architect of the integration of the Latin American subcontinent. This, however, was no mean calculated move on his part, with mere survival and hegemony in view. Chávez was the firmest believer in Simón Bolívar’s notion of the Great Homeland. He viewed the substantive political differences among countries as mere discussions within a large family. As soon as the opportunity arose, he sought to resume ties with the most reluctant, most pro-US member of the family, Colombia. He tried to expand the exchanges between Latin American countries well beyond trade relations, while making sure that they were based on a logic of solidarity, socio-economic complementarity and reciprocity, as opposed to a capitalist logic. His solidarity towards Cuba is well known, but it was equally decisive with regard to Argentina during its 2001–2002 sovereign debt crisis, as well as with the smaller countries of the Caribbean.

He was an enthusiast for all forms of regional integration that might help the continent stop being the US’s backyard. He spearheaded ALBA (the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas), then ALBA-TCP (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America–Peoples’ Trade Treaty), as an alternative to the US-sponsored FTAAs (Free Trade Area of the Americas), but he also

wanted to be a member of Mercosur. Two other institutions for the integration of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean spurred by Chávez were CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations).

### Anti-imperialism.

In the most critical periods of his rule (including fending off the 2002 coup attempt), Chávez had to face the United State’s most aggressive unilateralism (George W. Bush), which was to reach its most destructive height with the invasion of Iraq. Chávez believed that what happened in the Middle East would also befall Latin America if the latter did not prepare itself for such an eventuality, hence his interest in regional integration. But he also believed that the only way to stop the U.S.A. would be by fomenting multilateralism, thus reinforcing what was left of the Cold War. Hence the closer ties with Russia, China and Iran. He knew that the U.S.A. (with the support of the E.U.) would go on “freeing” every single country that happened to challenge Israel or pose a threat to the access to oil. Hence the “liberation” of Libya, followed by Syria and, in the near future, also Iran, as well as the U.S. and the E.U.’s “lack of interest” in “freeing” the country that is ruled by the most retrograde dictatorship of all, Saudi Arabia.

### 21st century socialism.

Chávez was not successful in building 21st century socialism, which he termed Bolivarian socialism. What would the model for such socialism be, especially given that he always revered the Cuban experiment, viewed as excessive by many? I find it somewhat reassuring that, on several occasions, Chávez approvingly quoted my own definition of socialism: “Socialism is democracy without end.” Granted, these were speeches, whereas in practice things would always prove more difficult and complex. He wanted Bolivarian socialism to be peaceful but still armed, lest it end up like Salvador Allende’s. He put a stop to the neoliberal project and to the IMF’s interference in the country’s economy; he nationalized companies, thus incurring the ire of foreign investors, who took revenge through an impressive campaign of demonization, both in Europe (mainly Spain) and the U.S.A. He dismantled existing capitalism, but failed to replace it which led to the supply and investment crises, inflation, and the growing dependence on oil revenues. He polarized the class struggle and put on the defensive both the old and the new capitalist classes, which had long held a near monopoly of the media



and had always kept control of finance capital. Polarization hit the streets and many saw the large increase in crime as a consequence thereof (but would they say as much about the crime increase in São Paulo or Johannesburg?).

#### The communal state.

Chávez knew that the state apparatus built by the oligarchies that had always held sway over the country would do anything to bring to a halt the new revolutionary process which, unlike other experiments in the past, was born of democracy and fed on it. So he sought to establish parallel structures, characterized by popular participation in public management. First there were the *misiones* and *gran misiones*, an extensive program of government policies in a variety of sectors, each bearing its own suggestive name (e.g. the Misión Barrio Adentro, providing health services to the popular class), enlisting popular participation and Cuban help. The institutionalization of popular power followed, a spatial plan implemented alongside the one already in place (consisting of states and municipalities). Its central cell was the commune; its basic principle, social property; and the construction of socialism, its main goal. Contrary to other Latin American experiments, where the attempt is made to combine representative democracy and participatory democracy (as is the case of participatory budgeting and sectorial popular councils), the communal state assumes a confrontational relationship between these two forms of democracy. That is perhaps its major weakness.

## THE CHALLENGES BEFORE VENEZUELA AND THE CONTINENT

What we have now is the beginning of the post-Chávez era. Will there be political and economic instability? Will the Bolivarian Revolution move forward? Is chávismo possible without Chávez? Will it withstand the likely strengthening of the opposition? The challenges are formidable. Here are some of them.

#### Civil-military unity.

Chávez based his power on two foundations: democratic adherence on the part of the popular classes and political unity between civil power and the military. Such unity has always been problematic throughout the continent, and whenever it did exist, it was always of a conservative and even dictatorial bend. A member of the military himself, Chávez achieved a progressive kind of unity that provided the system with stability. In order to do it, however, he had to give economic power

to the military which, in addition to being a potential source of corruption, may in the future turn against the Bolivarian revolution or subvert its transformative, democratic spirit, which pretty much amounts to the same thing.

#### Extractivism.

The Bolivarian revolution increased the dependence on oil and natural resources in general. This is far from being a Venezuelan phenomenon, as it can also be found in other countries ruled by governments that we view as progressive, such as Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador or Bolivia. Excessive dependence on resources is blocking the diversification of the economy while destroying the environment. Most of all, it constitutes an ongoing assault on the indigenous and peasant populations where those resources are to be found, as their waters become polluted, their ancestral rights are disregarded, international law – which requires that local populations be consulted– is violated, people are expelled from their lands and community leaders are murdered. Just last week we heard of the murder of Sabino Romero, a great indigenous leader from the Sierra de Perija (Venezuela) to whose struggle I have lent my solidarity for many years now. Will Chávez's successors know how to tackle this issue?

#### The political régime.

Even when legitimized through democratic mechanisms, a political régime shaped by a charismatic leader is bound to be problematic for his successors. In Venezuela the challenges are formidable. On the one hand, there is the weakness of institutions in general while, on the other, we have the creation of a parallel institutionality –the communal state– dominated by the party that was once started by Chávez, the PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela). In case the one-party temptation takes root, it will be the end of the Bolivarian revolution. The PSUV is an aggregate of a variety of factions, and coexistence amongst them has been difficult. Now that Chávez's unifying figure is gone, ways for expressing internal diversity must be found. Only through the practice of internal democracy exercised at a deep level will the PSUV be able to join the rest of the nation in articulating the democratic maturity that the country is going to need in order to ward off the assault on the part of the political forces bent on the piecemeal destruction of all that has been conquered by the popular classes over these years. Allowing corruption to run rampant and suppressing all differences with statements to the effect that everybody is

a Chavista and that one is more Chavista than the next person, is tantamount to opening the way to the enemies of the revolution. One thing is certain: if Chávez's example is to be followed, then it is imperative that criticism not be suppressed. The authoritarianism that has been a hallmark of vast sectors of the Latin American left needs to be put aside once and for all.

The great challenge for the progressive forces of the continent is to be able to tell between Chávez's disputatious and, certainly controversial, style and the substantive political thrust of his rule, which unequivocally favoured the popular classes and a solidarity-driven integration of the subcontinent. The conservative forces will do everything to blur them. Chávez contributed decisively to the consolidation of democracy in the social imaginary. He did consolidate it where it is hardest for it to be betrayed – the heart of the popular classes, which is also where betrayal is most perilous. Can anybody envisage the popular classes in so many other countries around the world shedding bitter tears for the death of a democratic political leader in the same way as Venezuelans are now inundating TV sets all over the planet? That is quite a precious heritage for both Venezuelans and Latin Americans. It would be a crime to waste it.

(Editor's Note: Sources that may have been used for this article have not been provided.)

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## “If I say it alone, I remain alone.” Ngobe political practices within and without the Panamanian Nation State.

by — Alexis Karkotis

[Eng]

Ethnographic fieldwork interview with the President of the Ngobe General Congress, Cacique Celio Guerra. Community of Acha, Comarca Ngobe-Bugle, March 13, 2013.

“If I say it alone, I remain alone” Cacique Guerra said with a soft tone of voice while sipping his coffee. “The General Congress is a government on the shoulder of various groups. But with Silvia Carrera it is not like that.”

“Like a head without body” I commented.

“Not exactly. It has the Panamanian government for shoulders” he responded and added immediately “And that is why we want to overthrow Law.537 which intervenes within our political affairs. And for this I have to negotiate with the various groups. The dirigentes (representatives), those voted in through government held elections, do not represent anyone. Anybody in an isolated community can claim to be a dirigente representing an X number of people. It used to be 50 or so, now it's around 15 people. And these dirigentes are almost always part of a political party and promote the interests of their party.”

Cacique Guerra is the President of the General Congress of the Ngobe indigenous people. 41 years old, an Agro-economist who received his master's degree in Barcelona, Cacique Guerra is one of the most respected Presidents the Ngobe General Congress ever had. A prolific public speaker, he sometimes travels for days within the Comarca of the Ngobe to meet groups and discuss with them problems the Ngobe face against government intentions to mine and dam in their land. The Comarca Ngobe-Bugle, the semi-autonomous reservation which was ratified in 1997, is a vast tropical landscape of 7,000 square kilometers, the majority of which is without roads and without electricity. Due to Panama's geographical

position, situated between North and South America and squashed between the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, it has one of the highest biodiversity indexes in the world.

The Ngobe population numbers around 300,000 people, with around 150,000 living within the Comarca. The majority of the Ngobe are horticulturalists who practice a mixture between a cash crop and a subsistence economy – the latter outweighing the former in actual practice. In his visits to communities throughout the Comarca, Cacique Guerra has a multidimensional role: a leader who inspires, a patient listener who is expected to offer solutions and resolve particular problems, a carrier of news from outside, the middleman through which opinions are fused together into one coherent narrative and the person who has the responsibility to call for specific actions when negotiations with the government no longer represent the Ngobe interests. I had the great honor to have met Cacique Guerra four years ago, in 2009, when the 80 Ngobe leaders walked a 440 km distance, from the Comarca to Panama City, over a span of 21 days, in order to hand the government a list of demands regarding mining and damming in their Land, a march which I participated in, during its last 70km. Upon arrival to Panama City, tired and exhausted, the Ngobe leaders were refused audience by President Martinelli, a neo-liberal millionaire who owns a number of enterprises in the country. Whereas the government demanded only one leader to enter the Presidential Palace, the Ngobe insisted that either 12 leaders would enter, who in effect represented regionally the entire Ngobe world, or none would enter. The moment Cacique Celio refused to enter the presidential gates on his own he confirmed, in a way, what the anthropological and ethno-historical literature indicates as regards to the political system of the Ngobe: that it is an acephalous one whereby decisions are based on mutualism and consent.

As one anthropologist, who has been conducting his fieldwork since the 1960's amongst the Ngobe, states: “Majority rule is still an alien concept amongst most Guaymi” – Guaymi being the name which they were addressed with until recently in most discourses. With the acquisition of their own Comarca in 1997 the Ngobe officially refused its use in favor of the name “Ngobe”, which in their language, Ngobere, means “Indigenous”.

The refusal by the government to meet the Ngobe leaders in 2009 outside the Presidential Gate in conjunction with the subsequent modifications of the Comarca's constitution – permitting mining and hydroelectric dam construction within the Comarca – would lead to violent clashes between the Ngobe

and police forces in 3 separate occasions, in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Leaving, in effect, the interior of the country paralyzed every time they occurred. These clashes have been so severe that many reporters and politicians claim that they are the worst the country has seen since the Noriega years.

The Ngobe, following their regular tactic, barricaded in each occasion the Pan-Americana highway as well as numerous side roads which lead into villages. The police response has been brutal in every event. In 2011 and 2012 the clashes reached their most intense point as they lasted around 10 days each time, causing the death of at least 4 Ngobe men while injuring dozens others. Moreover, at least a dozen Ngobe are currently battling to save their eyesight from the plastic bullets and the tear gas used by the police, while at least 22 others have been declared missing.

The following interview with Cacique Guerra was conducted on the eve of another round of clashes between the police and Ngobe activists over the issue of Rio Tabasara, which the government wishes to dam, one of at least 27 hydroelectric projects which it has planned to construct within or adjacent to the Comarca. The paradox of this, and which the Ngobe are well aware of, is that while 90% of the Comarca is without electricity, the electricity generated from the dam is meant to be sold to neighboring countries in Central America.

## INTERVIEW

**AK:** Cacique (Chief), first of all thank you for your time. I will try to cut straight to the point of relevance. In Europe these days, especially amongst the Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Spain, Portugal – as well as my home country Cyprus – there is a severe crisis in matters of political representation, a lack of direct and transparent democratic practices, which in many ways is the instigator behind the recent socio-economic crisis in Europe. Like for example, here in Panama, as well as in other countries in Central America, presidents and parliaments act and vote as if completely disconnected from the societal base, with their primary agenda to save ‘Capitalism’, ‘save the Economy’, save the Euro, save Greece, balance the Debt and so forth. How would you describe the political system of the Ngobe?

**CCG:** Primero, there has been an evolution during recent times, of our political system, especially in the past 50 years. In the beginning, the first era, until 1979, it



was managed by the Caciques. From 1979 until now it has been managed by the General Congress. The Congress takes collective decisions and its members must act according to these decisions. Of course, many times the members do not follow these decisions and this is what causes problems. Different governments in Panama – socialist and neo-liberal, do not recognize nor do they promote the General Congress. And if they do not recognize it, then they wish to divide it.

AK: How does the government go about doing that, I mean as regards to the division?

CCG: The hegemonic powers interfere in our internal political affairs and elect their own representatives in the congress; [via] sponsorships, money, advice and more. For example, in 1986 we had the first division. These are the Noriega years of power. One fraction was pro-Noriega, essentially supporters of the PRD (Partido Revolucionario Democrático), and the other was anti-Noriega, the civil unrest against him. This was our first experience. We had our legitimate General Congress and Noriega had his own, which he recognized. Our second experience was in the 1990's, in the village of Kankintu, in the region of No Kribu, around 1995-6. The same scenario: two Congresses, one pro government (again of the PRD) and one against.

In 2006 something happened in the community of Quwerima which was not expected. The government backed representative – this is during the Martín Torrijos years of the PRD – lost the election. His name was Alberto Montezuma. Cacique Pedro Rodríguez, with the support of the popular base, won the elections to become the President of the General Congress. He did this without food [to give out in meetings], money, transportation, sponsorship shirts, baseball caps, flags etc. Pedro won the elections through the support of the Mama Tata Church, the syndicates and various groups within the Comarca, such as women's artisan groups and the students. The PRD government reacted. So in 2009 they organized elections in Tugrí. Remember that in 2009 we have a change of government, as PRD lost the elections. These are the CD (Cambio Democrático) years of Martinelli. This was a Congress voted in by delegates, whom the government chose. Around 700 delegates voted and the winners received around 400 of those votes. This was a congress formed and founded by the government and it disappeared when the government changed. And this is what happens when governments change: their congress no longer exists. When PRD was ruling the country it had its own congress and when CD begun its rule, one of the first things it did was to elect its own congress.

AK: Via introducing Law.537 which changed the constitution of the Comarca, could you talk to us about this government action?

CCG: In January 2009, the traditional General Congress, by Pedro Rodríguez, organized elections to vote Regional Caciques. In March 2009, the 'government-recognized Congress', led by Alberto Montezuma, did the same. This is when Silvia Carrera first appeared, as she ran as a candidate and lost – that is, in the government-held elections. Now this is what she does next: she refuses to accept the results and calls the elections corrupted and illegitimate. She goes to the government and parliament and asks for new elections, ones monitored and carried out by the government, the parliament, the ministry of interior and basically by the Electoral Committee (the Tribunal Electoral). Of course, the government accepts her case. And it is here that the government intervenes in our elections, via a member of parliament called Pop Archibold, who was in charge of the Indigenous Commission in the National Assembly. The two ruling parties, the CD and PP (Partido Panameño), supported Pop's ideas for new elections. He then held meetings to carry out new elections for Caciques, in May of 2009. The traditional General Congress and the traditional Caciques opposed these elections. But Pop organized a commission without the support of the General Congress and the Caciques. The commission of Pop did not elect new Caciques but was focused on interfering with the Constitution (Carta Organica) of the Comarca, which as you know was ratified in 1999, two years after the acquisition of the Ngobe-Bugle Comarca. These alterations in the Constitution would go on to promote new elections – based on delegates and secret ballots – monitored by the Tribunal Electoral.

On the 2nd of June 2010, to our surprise, we had in our hands a modified constitution with a new law inserted into it, Law.537, a law inserted without the authority of the General Congress, the Caciques and effectively the Ngobe people. We did not accept it because we were not consulted. For example: "Can I drink your coffee" is different from "Alexi I am drinking your coffee".

In any case, Martinelli with Raul Mollino (the National Secretary) signed the law. So consequently, they had their delegate elections which were carried out by the tribunal electoral. They put \$800,000 to carry them out.

AK: How many participated?  
CCG: Well they say it's 21% but it is certain that the percentage is much less. After this, in March 2011, we held an election for the new General Congress in Pueblo Nuevo

and at the same day they had their own elections in Tugrí. That day, Pop Archibold, in his own congress, manipulated the votes and put Edilberto Sánchez as the president of their General Congress. In our elections around 1000 representatives participated who came from all the three regions of the Comarca, as well as from the provinces of Bocas del Toro, Veraguas, Santiago, Cocle, even from Costa Rica. In addition, we were supported by the Mama Tata Church, the students, the syndicates and various other groups, such as women's artisan cooperatives etc. All who had participated in the 2006 elections were there, as well as the members of the previous Congress. If there are around 300,000 Ngobe, within and outside the Comarca and all the way to Costa Rica, we try to reach them all and represent them all. But in Tugrí they had only 280 delegates from only 3 regions, and from those 280 at the present only 80 remain active; the rest, let us say, abdicated. So this Congress, far from representing the entire Ngobe population, like our Congress, represents government interests, fundamentally of mining and damming in our land.

In September 2011 this fake Congress carried out elections for Caciques and there they voted for Silvia Carrera, who basically won with just 6% of the votes. This is because there are 109,000 registered voters within the Comarca and she received, at the most, 6000 – which is the official number given by the government, as this number was calculated by the attendance of delegates who supposedly represented a particular number of people. These elections for Caciques cost \$1,100,000. So, plus \$800,000 for the one before, we have a total of almost \$2,000,000 spent to organize fake elections. Silvia thus, though she is often promoted by the media as the General Cacique of the Ngobe, did not win by popular vote but a delegate vote. If anything, she is a Cacique of her particular region, but not of us, not of the Comarca.

AK: So the simple question would be, why did the government go such a long way to change the elections?

CCG: Because the government wants to mine and dam in the Ngobe-Bugle Comarca and they want to speak to their own people in order to do so. And the government recognizes puppet leaders like Edilberto and Silvia as the official Ngobe leaders and invites them in the negotiations. Their signature is vital. The problem of course is that the people do not wish these projects, walk around and ask any Ngobe. As you know, 95% of the Ngobe are against an open pit mine in Cerro Colorado – which is in the heart of the Comarca – as they are also against the damming of our rivers.

AK: So how does the General Congress react and act against these developments.

CCG: Look, we had serious problems because our General Congress begun losing its support from the people, because it begun acting on its own. Pedro Rodríguez, while with good intentions, begun acting on his own, with good motives that are against developmental projects, but without consulting the people. Like Silvia does now, his Congress was acting like a head without a body. This created, at the time, problems. This is what we tried to change with the current Congress. The General Congress, voted by the majority of people, has base groups throughout the Ngobe world who wish to be consulted regularly in regards to all the relevant insights on recent developments. Parallel to this, there are political groups which are not part of the General Congress. The Frenadesco syndicate network of workers, for example, is one, which, though it supported the elections it does not have a say in matters of the General Congress. Other groups, like Mama Tata, students and syndicates formed by Ngobe workers, also support the General Congress and in addition have a say in its internal affairs. All these are groups against the repression. These relationships between independent groups, I would say, begun 10 years ago. An alliance was formed between them called "Coordinating Against Mining". In short "La Coordinadora". The problem arose when the people who initiated this movement begun closing the doors to the General Congress, the syndicates, Frenadesco, students etc. They wanted full authority over matters of action without any group entering and retaining its identity within the Coordinadora. So we left and separated. When the General Congress left they also lost their support from us. Now they want to reconsolidate, to find unity. But it is not so easy and straightforward because on the way they lost their vision. Until now, the matter with the "Coordinadora" is not a closed one. What is certain is that the fight against repression must be collective and all its legal parameters must go through the General Congress.

AK: But divisions and disagreements always occur, it is in fact part of the democratic ideal that they should occur.

CCG: Of course, there are sectors within the Comarca, albeit small and few, who do support the government's actions. More lamentable is that there are a lot of people who consider these actions normal. They absorb without considering these actions. But we have focused on a different discourse:  
- Autodetermination of the Ngobe

people without interference by the Panamanian government.  
- Autonomy of the General Congress without the interference of the Panamanian government.  
- And that internal conflicts should be resolved internally without government interference.

Furthermore, how we choose our representatives is and should be our choice, whether that is via delegates or open vote. This is something which we decided internally within ourselves.

AK: How do Ngobe vote? I know traditionally it is via open vote. Could you explain the process?  
CCG: Usually in communities a line is formed behind each person who represents a given opinion. So a line, which is an open vote, resolves the matter at hand in a very transparent manner. Because everyone knows who voted what and who. As regards to the Congress, in Congress meetings we decide where and when elections will be held regarding any subject at hand. The Congress organizes the elections and chooses an electoral committee to carry them out. In the case of a change of Congress, the same thing, the departing Congress organizes the path for the following Congress elections: food, transport, announcements and all other logistics needed. The method of voting, open line or en mass ballot casting, is our decision. The traditional voting method is open line, that is, through a direct vote. This is what we usually carry out because this is the method most approved by the Ngobe population. Sometimes, for other matters, we follow a secret vote. But to do that we vote openly. So an open vote to carry out a hidden vote is required.

AK: What authority does the General Congress have?

CCG: The General Congress has no power over the people. Its role is to discuss various matters, approve, reject, print copies of decisions and make these decisions public. The General Congress has to comply with the decision of the collectivity. The Congress is a place where all the fractions, all the groups within the Ngobe, are represented and discuss between themselves until they reach a decision. Only a Congress can change the decision made by a previous Congress. The President of the General Congress has to comply with the popular decision. For my part, I can say what I think, and my take on things may be influential, but if the population says something different, I have to comply. I am not a king, like with the occidental system. Our system is completely different. That is why we are against this Law.537 from the start. Not just because it is completely against our culture and our way of conducting

politics, but because from the start it is an illegal decree. It was imposed upon us and we are not obliged in any way to comply with something which has not been discussed amongst us first.

AK: President, once again thank you for your time. Is there a message you would like to give out to the world before we conclude?

CCG: Well, that the people of each country have to manage their own affairs without allowing their fate to the hands of politicians who act in the name of capitalism. What our government, for example, does not seem to realize is that our mountains and rivers are not negotiable. Not negotiable means there is nothing to negotiate. We regard rivers as life-giving sources and the mountains the place where rivers become fountains. No matter what money or promises we are offered we do not negotiate, nor our rivers, nor our mountains. Our fight is to protect our Land, not to negotiate its price. My message to Europeans is to do exactly that, because the Earth is sacred, not just for us, but for all.

ALEXIS KARKOTIS

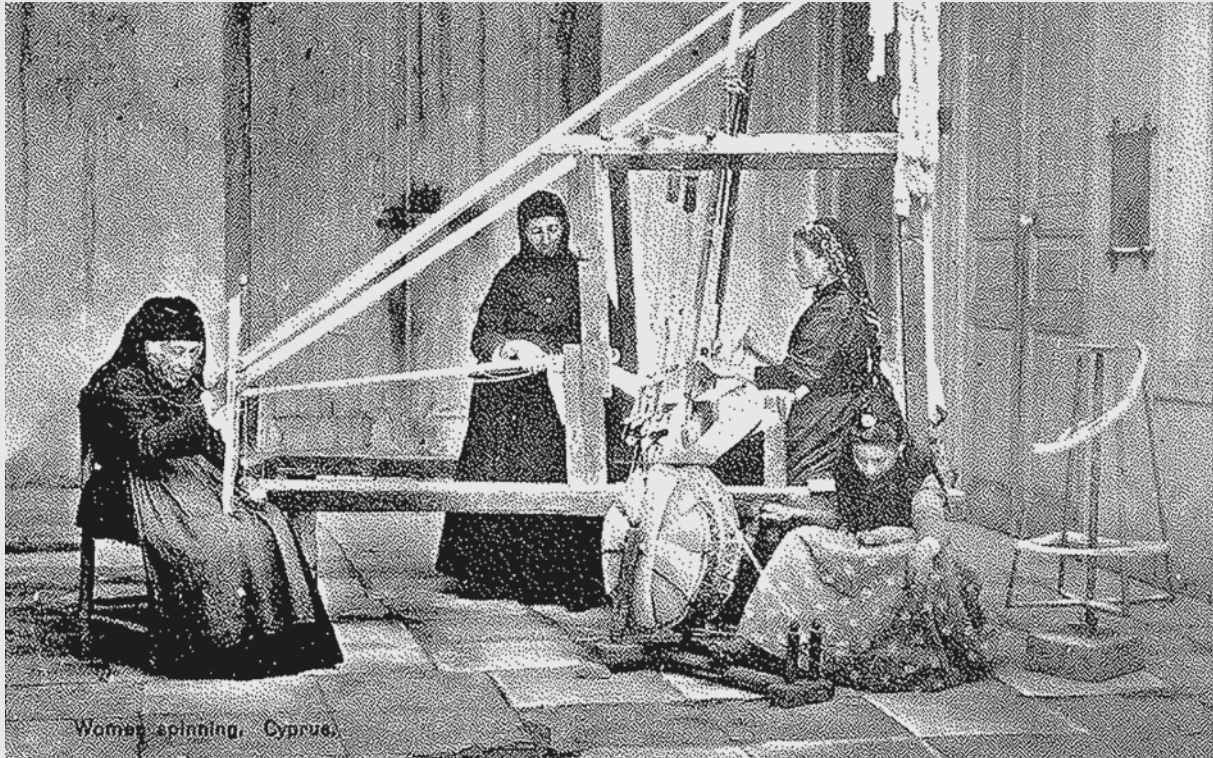
Alexis Karkotis has a BSc degree in Ecology and holds a doctorate in Social Anthropology from the University of Bristol. He has been conducting ethnographic fieldwork research amongst the Ngobe-Bugle indigenous people in Panama since 2006. In his PhD thesis he focused on the formation of concentrated communities in the Ngobe-Bugle Comarca and how this represents a radical change from the traditional settlement pattern of dispersed hamlets.



Re Aphrodite  
— Open Conversation  
on Collaboration I

with — Antonis Hadjikyriacou (AH), Demetra Ignatiou (DI),  
Chrystalleni Loizidou (CL), Marios Menelaou (MM), Despo Passia (DP),  
Yiannis Tournazis (YT), Evi Tselika (ET), Andreas Vrahimis (AV)

[Eng]



Foscolo, J.P., Cyprus Women Spinning.  
Ministry of Justice and Public Order.Retrieved March 19th  
from www.mjpo.gov.cy

On Tuesday, March 12th 2013, between 19:00 – 20:40 Re Aphrodite held a short-notice open conversation at the Point Centre for Contemporary Art,<sup>1</sup> to discuss collaboration: in the arts, in Cyprus, and in broader terms.<sup>2</sup> This document presents glimpses of the conversation among the participants,<sup>3</sup> recorded, haphazardly transcribed, translated, and presented here in its colloquial form: a glimpse into a dialogical exchange on structures and patterns of collaboration.

Before we had time to turn on the recorder, the conversation began with what is best described as gossip over the recent formal break in collaboration between the Cyprus Chamber of Fine Art (EKATE)<sup>4</sup> housed in the Republic of Cyprus and the European Mediterranean Artists Association (EMAA)<sup>5</sup> housed in the Cypriot north. The collaboration between the two has been taken for granted since 2003 as an attempt by both organisations to take a progressive political stance by working together and around the island’s ethnic division. Discussion over the EKATE – EMAA dispute briefly touched upon the fact that the way the relationship of the two organisations is presently being tested has to do with their sudden adoption of their respective side’s official (legal) discourse regarding the Cyprus property-issue,<sup>6</sup> often attributed to the political Right, while their co-operation so far relied on a different type of vernacular altogether. Thus the question of what collaboration may mean in a local context, with Cypriot peculiarities in mind, was rather serendipitously framed in relation to a not so abstract notion of ‘conflict’.

ET: It is interesting to consider how one can collaborate with different social groups and across disciplines and doing so without escaping the framework of a fair collaborative structure. How for example in the case of artists collaborating with non-artists, the artist/facilitator does not adopt the role of the director but rather receives direction through the experience of working within such a group.

AV: I just came out of a class teaching Descartes who even doubts the existence of other minds [laughter]. Collaboration is interesting if one looks at it through the perspective of ethics and through a framework that is associated with issues of copyright, open software etc. What interests me is collaboration as it is understood not in the literal sense, within physical space or within a community, but rather through networks and non-physical collaborations. Through my research I focus on something that can be considered the opposite of collaboration. I look into polemic structures and how this can be perceived as something productive. So how non-collaboration or agonistic interactions can at the same time be understood as collaborative.

DI: Collaboration used to frighten me but I was forced to collaborate during my Masters degree in Holland. The university program was such that almost all the assignments and projects were carried out collaboratively. At the beginning I found this quite difficult as it was not something I was used to, but in the process I discovered how nice it is to collaborate with other people and that very interesting ideas arise through this. There is something to be gained even through the frictions that come up. When there is a conflict within collaboration what happens is that at that point you think you are right. And then you take some time to cool off and you rethink it and then slowly new options become visible. You see different viewpoints and possibilities that you could have entirely ignored previously. It is also interesting to consider what Evi said in relation to the collaboration of artists and non-artists, how roles are assigned within a team or group and whether someone assumes an authoritative position.

DP: Collaboration depends on what kind of person you are. I find that I cannot be as productive if I work continuously individually. This does not work for me. The concepts do not move forward, the form does not unravel as easily. Of course individual work is needed but it is an extremely significant part of the productive process if there is a network or a collaboration, or a dialogue that one can engage with. Informal dialogue can assist, but it is even better if the dialogue itself is an essential part of the production process. Collaboration is the most productive way of working but it does not come without its risks.

CL: Right now and as things are, trying to collaborate, integrating collaboration within one’s work, persisting with it despite a pervasive mentality of competition and individualism, could be seen as a type of activism. So insisting on collaboration in the midst of collapse of previous structures here and internationally is interesting in itself. I see insisting on collaboration as a sort of activism. And this can be even more interesting in terms of governance...

YT: The concept of juxtaposing antagonism and collaboration that AV mentioned is particularly interesting. And we also have to contextualize it beyond the individual and the professional dimension. It is important to mention that we live in a nation that was basically created through a collaboration of communitarian antagonisms. This is also reflected through our earlier discussion in relation to EKATE and EMAA. It is to be expected within collaborative structures that there are times of controversy and disagreement. However if the collaboration is important to those involved then this will be resolved and cooperation restored. You mentioned Holland earlier. I also studied theatre there and theatre as a profession or field is an absolute collaboration, because if you do not collaborate the show cannot go on. We are immersed within structures of collaboration in a sense, even in politics. On the other hand, collaborating is a pleasant experience. Come to think of it, I work in an institution that is a collaboration: Nicosia Contemporary Art Centre and Pieridis Foundation. Most exhibitions that I have developed are collaborations. So in one way or another I think that collaboration is gratifying and necessary. Even when you write there is some form of collaboration, whether it is engagement with what others have written, or whether it is through verbal exchanges and reflections. There is also of course, the idea of activism as an everyday social collaboration. So I think we are at a point in time where we should be saying: Is there anything but collaboration?

ET: I am not sure what else there is, as it is present in all disciplines and professions. Sometimes though it is difficult! CL and I, for example, when we were talking on how to begin this conversation tonight, we thought that we could start by mentioning that when we started organizing this we had a fight...

YT: But does the concept of collaboration imply that that there will always be consensus and agreement?

ET: Of course not, I think that one accepts that there is an inherent element of conflict.

CL: At least when one is trying to carry out something they find meaningful.



DP: One has to understand and be at ease with the fact that there will be conflict. This has to be accepted and managed accordingly.

MM: Our society has reached a point that cooperation is essential and crucial. We have to move away from the ‘each man is an island’ model, which just doesn’t work in today’s society. We have been raised in a social context that taught us to think mostly of our own selves and not the environment or other people around us... We have to work together to move forward... By this I am in no way implying that we cannot consider our own needs or work individually... We just have to start learning as a society what the true meaning of collaboration is. And no, this does not mean that if we collaborate we will always agree. Through the friction that collaboration entails many positive outcomes can arise.

AH: It is very important to consider who it is that you collaborate with, how, under which conditions and within which context. It could be so as to move beyond one’s own way of looking at things and through this to be exposed to other perspectives. Collaboration can therefore demonstrate something that one might have difficulty in discerning because of being immersed in a given situation. Further to this I would like to come back to what was said before in relation to collaboration and conflict. I think it is just as dangerous to beautify or romanticize collaboration. In the same way that we beautify and romanticize coexistence. We can often forget that coexistence can entail a wide range of interactions and multi-directional processes, which can be initiated through conflict but can result in collaboration or to a peaceful, amicable coexistence. Within this context there are many delicate thresholds that can demonstrate alternative types and processes of production. These alternative processes are just as important and we do not have to view them qualitatively.

MM: What do you mean by ‘beautifying collaboration’?

AH: I am talking in reference to the idea of perceiving collaboration as something that is inherently positive. By portraying it as something nice and constructive we are emphasizing the lesser difficult aspects of collaborative processes. This is what this conversation has been demonstrating. Conflict for example is part of collaborating and it is also a process of cooperation. Through my experience I have noticed that many people cannot handle conflict and cannot realize the way it can assist the process of production. They rather view conflict as something frightening, something scary that can hinder the collaborative process.

The conversation steered into a debate that juxtaposed a view of the nation as a primary collaborative model (MM) and one that sees it as an exclusive set of power-structures that need to be overcome. This led to the question of whether, as a type of collectivity, the nation may be seen as beneficial to certain types of cooperation, whether it is one that encourages or suppresses them (DP), a question that becomes especially relevant in the case of Cyprus. Among other things the conversation touched upon the question of academic collaboration (AV, AH) as an inherently limited practice (CL, ET), and on the personal-emotional difficulties of working with others closely, namely the need to overcome one’s ego as a prerequisite to meaningful collaboration – a practice with links to a spirituality of some sort.

Three days later the local financial-banking system collapsed. (March 2013)

Rather than continue transcribing and translating in the midst of profound uncertainty, we thought a better use of white space might be to ask everyone to contribute their thoughts a few days later.

YT: It is without doubt that the recent and ongoing dramatic developments concerning Cyprus, its role and position within the European Union as well as the rhetoric for its potential exit, make the debate on collaboration more relevant than ever. In addition, they underline the geopolitical, political, social, economic and cultural implications around established patterns of collaboration of the [post] capitalist era and challenge their conventional structure.

ET: It is critical to re-examine the way current systems of ‘democracy’ are operating, as well as the patterns of collaboration that these systems reflect and entail. Issues of hegemonic structures, power relations, production and representation arise in a Cyprus that should be realizing by now that it has for years been living way beyond its means and remembering that we went from the shovel to the ipad in one generation. The need for alternative political subjectivities, for innovative models of collaboration, for creative thinking, for solidarity and for the emergence of new social practices based on empathy and cohesion, has been evident for some time. Now it is urgent. And the role of the artist and the cultural

practitioner is important in this process!

DI: Discussing collaboration within the contextual and chronological framework of the emerging developments is ever so timely and topical. The phenomena of collapsing governance and policy patterns and epidemic instability, currently centered on Cyprus, endorse the problematic and insufficient nature of the established and utilized forms and models of collaboration. The circumstances urge upon the re-invention of collaborative practices and challenge our collective ability to manage the complex interdependencies underpinning the collaborative mode of operation. To respond to these challenges and to take advantage of this incipient space for bottom up collective approaches, we must be willing to overcome egocentric behavior and negotiate individualistic aspirations in order to synchronize our efforts towards a more sustainable and shareable future.

CL: The question of how collaboration and conflict – or adversity – involve each other need not remain abstract: to drastically deal with the coming wave of unemployment, poverty, and hopelessness we’ll have to turn to collaborative models based on the understanding that we are each others’ most valuable resource. This is already happening. Many of these models are not new, nor do they have much to do with the language of activism in any useful sense. A question we have to struggle with, no less in the present case, is whether and how contemporary art might play a role in all this.

This was the first Re Aphrodite: Open Conversation on Collaboration. If you are interested in future conversations then check out: [www.reaphrodite.org](http://www.reaphrodite.org)

FOOTNOTES

1. The Point Centre for Contemporary Art (<http://pointcentreforcontemporaryart.com/>) is located at Megaron Hadjisavva, 2 Evagorou Street, 1097 Nicosia, Cyprus.
2. The invitation framed abstract debates around ‘working together’ [συνεργασία] with more specific local concerns. The following questions were put forward: How do present trends within the arts counter-act the auteur model and how can we try out models developed and tested in other fields? If different places can be said to reflect their very own forms of collaborative patterns (within the arts, but also elsewhere), then what has been the prevailing pattern in Cyprus? How can local interpretations of artistic collaboration build upon or challenge notions of artistic collaboration as trends that have built up in the art world since the beginning of the 20th century and exploded as a methodology since the 1960s? How do different forms of collaboration create community and how do they in turn challenge dominant political and social narratives and patterns? Where does collaboration fit in within the context of ‘the social function’ of the arts (a prevalent question in the last twenty years)? Can we speak of an ethics of collaboration beyond managerial prescriptions of good practice and models of team structure? Can we work towards developing a culture of openness in the arts that reflects on broader questions around productivity, social organisation and good governance? Have new technologies and social media changed the nature of collaboration in some way? What is the role of open conversation and dialogue within collaborative practices? How far can a participatory, collaborative event such as this, go towards reflexively dealing with its own subject matter?
3. The invitation was open and circulated broadly through social media, although the short notice limited participation to a small number. This turned out to be a blessing.
4. EKATE, founded in 1964, by a group of Greek Cypriot artists, often considered ‘the fathers’ of Cypriot Art along with predominant members of the so called ‘first generation’, and ‘the inter-war generation’ including T. Kanthos and A. Diamantis, M. Kasialos, C. Dikeos, T. Stefanides, A. Asproftas, C. Savvas, G. Hughes, S. Vatsis, L. Economou (see Χρύσανθος Χρήστου [1983], Σύγχρονη Ιστορία της Νεότερης και Σύγχρονης Κυπριακής Τέχνης [1977], Λευκωσία: Μορφωτική Υπηρεσία Υπουργείου Παιδείας). The association states its aims as “to promote artistic creation in Cyprus, to preserve the right of free artistic expression and work in all the areas of fine arts, as well as protecting the rights of Cypriot artists. These aims are pursued and accomplished through member coordinated efforts, group or individual exhibitions in Cyprus or overseas, contacts and participation in international conferences, exhibitions and artistic events, either as a Chamber on its own or in association with other intellectual and cultural organizations from Cyprus or abroad.” (The Cyprus Chamber of Fine Arts / Το Επιμελητήριο Καλών Τεχνών (E.KA.TE), 2009. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from: <http://www.ekatecy.com/about.htm>)
5. European Mediterranean Art Association (EMAA) was established in 2002. It states its aims as “sharing ideas on art by breaching the barriers erected by economical and political conundrums to artistic creativity and production, as well as uniting artists, art devotees and enthusiasts to institutionalize for a stronger voice.” It emphasises that “with all its activities, publications, bi-communal art events and international events, EMAA is the first non-profit institutionalized art organization in northern Cyprus.” (Bufferzone – Partners. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from: <http://www.buffer-zone.org/static/partners.html>)
6. For comprehensive reportage on the dispute see Μωυσέως & Λάμπρου, March 17, 2013, EKATE, σε νέες περιπέτειες, Πολίτης.

Despo Passia, Yiannis  
Toumazis, Evi Tselika,  
Andreas Vrahimis

Antonis Hadjikyriacou,  
Demetra Ignatiou, Chrystalleni  
Loizidou, Marios Menelaou,

Re Aphrodite  
– Open Conversation  
on Collaboration 1



Το Χαράτσι

[Grk]

Ιερόδουλες-Ιερείς  
Καλλιτέχνες-Κακοτέχνες  
Άγνωστοι-Άγνωστοί  
Ήρωες-Αντιήρωες

Misfits-All fit



Photo by Nicolas Andreou. 'To Xapάτσι' is located at Ledenes 30, Old City, Nicosia, Cyprus.



## ΜΕ ΤΟΝ ΤΡΟΠΟ ΤΟΥ Γ. Σ.

από — Γιάννης Στίγκας

[Grk]

Το παρόν ποίημα αποτελεί τμήμα της ποιητικής συλλογής 'Ο δρόμος μέχρι το περίπτερο', εκδόσεις Μικρή Άρκτος, 2012.

Μονίμως ονειρεύομαι  
 μια ανηφόρα που θα βγάξει ολόισια  
 στα σπλάχνα σου  
 να μπαίνω και ν’ αλλάζω τους αλγόριθμους  
 έτσι που η καρδιά  
 να ξεκουφαίνει ενδελεχώς τη νόηση  
 Αγχιβατείν – Pallaksch  
 που λέγαν κι οι παππούδες μου  
 (πατώντας με τα πόδια τους τον μούστο)  
 υπονοώντας σκοτεινά

*Αίμα που’χει το μέλλον μας  
 και πώς να το χορέψεις*

- 

Ίσως  
 εάν ερχόταν σήμερα ένας άνθρωπος  
 μονάχα με το τυπικό προσόν της εποχής  
 αυτή τη γεύση πρόχειρου γκρεμού  
 –Ξέρετε–  
 ένας απ’ τους χιλιάδες παραγιούς  
 του πανικού  
 όπως τους έραβε ο Θεός  
 Ξέχασε μια βελόνη μες στα στήθια τους

Εάν ερχότανε  
 και κοίταζε

από το μάτι της βελόνας που σας έλεγα

θα του στοιχειώνναν όλα τα φωνήεντα  
 θα του πατούσε το μυαλό ένα τραύλισμα

τ-τ-τ-τ-τ... τ-τ-τ-τώρα π-π-π-π-π... π-π-π-που  
 ζ-ζ-ζ-ζ-ζ... ζ-ζ-ζ-ζ-ζορίσανε τ-τ-τ-τ-τα-τα-τα-τα  
 π-π-ππ-πρα-πρα... π-π-πράγματα ν-ν-νο-νο...  
 νο-νο-νομίζεις π-π-π... π-π-π-πως το-το-το...  
 το-το-το-το... το φ-φ-φ-φ-φ... φ-φ-φ-φω-φω-φως  
 κ-κ-κ-κ-κ-κ... κ-κ-κ-κα... κ-κ-κ-κκ-κκ-κ-κ...  
 κ-κ-κ-κα-κα-καταλαβαίνει;

- 

Δεν έχω φυσικά καμιάν απάντηση

σπκώνω το λοιπόν στους ώμους μου όπως όλοι σας  
 μ’ εκείνο το παλιό  
 κουσούρι μου της άνοιξης  
 ακόμα δεν ξεμπέρδεψα  
 κι αφήνω να μου βόσκουν τον λαιμό  
 – κάτι σημάδια κόκκινα  
 δεν είναι –φευ– από φιλιά

τη λένε πνιγμοσύνη τη λεγάμενη

αλλά  
 δεν είναι η ποίηση που βάζει τη θηλειά  
 αλλά  
 κλοτσάει το σκαμνί

- 

Γιατί η ποίηση  
 –ψιτ, μεγάλε–  
 δεν είναι αιώρα ρεμβασμών  
 δεν είν’ το φτερωτό σου κατοικίδιο  
 –ψιτ, μεγάλε–  
 Όταν υποδύεσαι το φεγγάρι  
 να το υποδύσαι και στη χάση του  
 –δε θα σ’ το κάνω πιο λιανά–  
 Αν το νοείς αυτό  
 έχει καλώς  
 αλλιώς  
 Ε ρε, Μαγιακόφσκι που σου χρειάζεται

- 

Πού να ’σαι τώρα, βρε Βλαδίμηρε,  
 τώρα που και τα δυο μας νόμπελ  
 έγιναν συμπληγάδες  
 Κανείς δεν αρμενίζει πια για τ’ άρμενα  
 κανείς για το γαλάζιο  
 μονάχο του συχνάζει στα μεγάλα υψόμετρα

και στις παλιές αγάπες

- 

Η Δώρα  
 η Κωνσταντίνα  
 η Ευανθία  
 Όποτε αλλάζω το πλευρό στον ύπνο μου  
 μου ξεκουρδίζουν σιωπηλά το ζώδιο  
 μέχρι να γίνει το ποτέ  
 το τυχερό μας νούμερο  
 –τι ρώσικη ρουλέτα, Παναγία μου–  
 εσύ γνωρίζεις απ’ αυτά, Βλαδίμηρε,  
 έγινε  
 έγινε στην Οντέσσα

εδώ να δεις τι γίνεται

Εδώ

the evil eye is working overtime

λυπάμαι που το γράφω αλλά

το φως το καταντήσαμε  
 την τέλεια –για το *τίποτε*– κρυψώνα

–τι άλλο θέλεις να σου πω–

εχθές το βράδυ στο μετρό  
 αγγίζονταν χιλιάδες σώματα  
 κι ούτε ένα τσαφ για τα προσχήματα  
 ούτε ένα τόσο δα ηλεκτρόνιο  
 κάτι  
 ν’ ανατριχιάσει τα χαμένα βλέμματα

μήπως και δούμε την Ιθάκη ολόγυμνη  
 κάτω από τα ταγιέρ  
 και τα πουκάμισα

- 

Είναι που να τρελαίνεται κανείς

όπως Ξηλώνουν έτσι τα μερόνυχτα  
 το *αίμα* σου κλωστή-κλωστή  
 οι τρεις σου μοίρες να πανιάζουνε  
 τι περιμένεις ν’ αρχινίσει, βρε κουτέ,  
 δεν είναι παραμύθι αυτό

είναι

μονάχα το κουφάρι του

- 

Η τραγωδία του τόπου μου  
 Αν εξαιρέσεις βέβαια τους σεισμούς  
 όλοι οι υπόλοιποι –ισμοί  
 μάς πούλησαν κατάμουτρα  
 Καλέ μου λόρδε Βύρωνα,  
 τσάμπα τη λούστγκες την έξοδο  
 τσάμπα την άναψες την έξοδο  
 ο πυρετός σου σήμερα  
 υπάρχει–δεν υπάρχει στα συγγράμματα  
 του ’χουν κοτσάρει κάτι ελεεινά μικρόβια  
 ενώ ήταν σκέτη λεβεντιά  
 οχτώ μποφόρ Χριστός  
 κι ακόμα τόσα  
 Τότε – χαμένα μες στις καλαμιές  
 τώρα – χαμένα στα σκυλάδικα

- 

THIS IS THE PLACE GENTLEMEN

Πολλές οργιές κάτω απ’ το τίποτα  
 έτσι  
 που τα μαλλιά μας μπλέκονται στις ρίζες του

*υιέ μου υιέ μου Αβεσσαλώμ*

σαν εκκρεμές δεν θα’ χες πέραση  
 έτσι κι αλλιώς εμείς  
 τον χρόνο τον εισάγουμε απ’ το Γκρίνουϊτζ

γιατί ο δικός μας

έχει λαγούμια μαύρα κι ανεκπλήρωτα  
 φωνάζεις την αγάπη  
 και σου επιστρέφει ο αντίλαλος αιμόφυρτος

έχει μυριάδες χέρια που κοπήκανε  
 δεν ήταν αγαλμάτων  
 όλα τους  
 αργότερα μαρμάρωσαν

- 

Τι ειρωνεία κι αυτή, Βλαδίμηρε  
 Εάν ερχόσουν σήμερα  
 μπορεί και να μη σ’ άκουγα  
 μένω σε δρόμο πολυσύχναστο  
 σειρήνες κορναρίσματα  
 η ακοή μου μπάχαλο  
 –όχι, σου λέω ψέματα–  
 είναι που η μοναξιά  
 με βάζει από μικρό στη διαπασών  
 γι’ αυτό κι οι πιο πιστοί μου στίχοι

το θαύμα *είν’* ένα χελιδόνι απόκλημνο  
 ή  
 ρε Κωνσταντίνα, πες μου τελικά  
*πώς γίνεται*  
 να μην *είσαι* εδώ  
 και να’χει πανσέληνο

(κι άλλα πολλά  
 πιο μαύρα απ’ τα ανεκπλήρωτα)

μικροφωνίζουν μες στον ύπνο μου  
 κι υπνοβατώ  
 με τη στυφάδα που ’χουν τα όνειρα  
 με τις σαχλές πιτζάμες μου

άχου να γκρεμιστώ σωστά  
 σ’ ένα σωστό ξημέρωμα

μπας και φωνάξω αληθινά κι εγώ

*Αγχιβατείν – Pallaksch*

Τ’ αστροκαμένο φάντασμα

που τέλεια μ’ ενσαρκώνει

ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ ΣΤΙΓΚΑΣ

Ο Γιάννης Στίγκας γεννήθηκε στην Αθήνα το 1977. Σπούδασε Ιατρική. Έχει συμμετάσχει σε διεθνής εκθέσεις και έχει εκδώσει τέσσερις ποιητικές συλλογές. Τα ποιήματα του εμφανίζονται σε διάφορα περιοδικά ποίησης και ανθολογίες. Τα ποιήματα του έχουν μεταφραστεί σε Γερμανικά, Γαλλικά, Σουηδικά, Ισπανικά, Αγγλικά, Σερβικά και Βουλγάρικα.



## Climbing the Mountain: ‘Βάστα με να σε βαστώ νάνεβούμεν το βουνό’

text by — Christina Skarpari  
✂ illustration by — Nico Stephou

[Eng]

‘Βάστα με να σε βαστώ νάνεβούμεν το βουνό’ is an old Greek proverb that supports that by helping each other out we are more likely to overcome difficulties; the essence being that cooperation and care are fundamental to paving the way towards true social and ethical progress.

Elements of the proverb:  
‘Βάστα με να σε βαστώ’ ▶ Hold me and I’ll hold you ▶ To support each other.  
‘Νάνεβούμεν’ ▶ To climb ▶ To overcome.  
‘Το βουνό’ ▶ The mountain ▶ The obstacle.

Mountains explained  
(geologically):

- ▶ Tall.
- ▶ Steep.
- ▶ In chains (i.e. erosional, fault-block/folded).
- ▶ Or isolated (i.e. volcanic).

Mountains...:

- ▶ Remind us of how small we are.
- ▶ Can challenge communication.
- ▶ Are ‘too big to fail’.
- ▶ Are often left undefined and unchallenged.
- ▶ Have misty peaks.

Literary understanding  
of mountains:

- ▶ Strong and vast.
- ▶ Age old wisdom.
- ▶ Divinity.
- ▶ The heavens, a sacred path.

Reflect:

Their vast stretches remind us of eternity. Climbing upwards becomes a sacred path that may lead to heights of heaven or take us down to pits of hell. The breeze, inhaled from earthly vaults, hums in harmony along with us; and as we head towards the skyward the mountain becomes Jacob’s ladder. The glazed air chokes our way. The mountain defeats us. We try to tame it. We climb, remembering that awe-inspiring heights lay straight ahead, a crown of stars, sparkling. We climb, thinking that minerals like gems will slowly start to sink.

HOW to climb a mountain:

- ▶ Start climbing!
- ▶ Stop for breath.
- ▶ Inhale and exhale.
- ▶ Carry on.

- ▶ Ignore pain.
- ▶ Rest when necessary.
- ▶ Rise up.

Possible painful outcomes:

- ▶ Injury, aches and soreness.
- ▶ Pricks, thorns & spikes.
- ▶ Failure.

Technical requirements:

- ▶ Partnership and assistance.
- ▶ Solidarity and sacrifice.
- ▶ Health and strength.
- ▶ Persistence and perseverance.
- ▶ Overcoming fear of failure.
- ▶ Learning as you go and staying focused.

Note that:  
the direction you choose to climb may be more important than the speed.

People climb mountains to:

- ▶ Rise spiritually.
- ▶ Become stronger.
- ▶ Achieve goals.
- ▶ Compete.
- ▶ Prove their worth.

Question:

Should the defeat of others add value to your success? When do we climb in solidarity for each other and when do we climb to prove ourselves?

Consider that:

- ▶ We all strive to climb different mountains for different reasons.
- ▶ Some mountains are shared.
- ▶ There may be no trophy at the peak the way we imagine it.
- ▶ Reaching down for the hand of another may be as important as what the summit represents.
- ▶ The climb itself may be more important than the peak.

WHY persist to climb?

- ▶ To gain better perspective/ understanding of your surroundings from an elevated observation point.
- ▶ To acquire the strength to help others up the mountain.

HOW to build a mountain:

- ▶ Part 1.1: preliminary findings
- ▶ An examination of your landscape’s features: society, history, culture, language, etc.
- ▶ Understanding your own ‘geomorphology’: your role, communication, abilities, vision, potential, etc.

Part 1.2: primary research

- ▶ Scrutinize the earth.
- ▶ Consider the faults and cracks.
- ▶ Mend and fill-up the cracks as well as you can.

Part 1.3: primary applications

- ▶ Start small.
- ▶ Position one stone.
- ▶ Then another.
- ▶ Create a solid foundation.
- ▶ Arrange stones together until you make a heap.

Part 1.4: developing the heap

- ▶ Ask for the help and blessings of locals & other communities.
- ▶ Continue adding to the heap.
- ▶ Contemplate ways of elevation.

Note that:

Once arranged, even if someone were to remove one of the stones, you would still have a heap. The removal of a single stone is not enough to change this.

Caution:

Take care not to isolate the mountain as that may risk it becoming volcanic, which may lead to eruptions! Now, prepare yourself for the next one, as there will be many more mountains to climb!

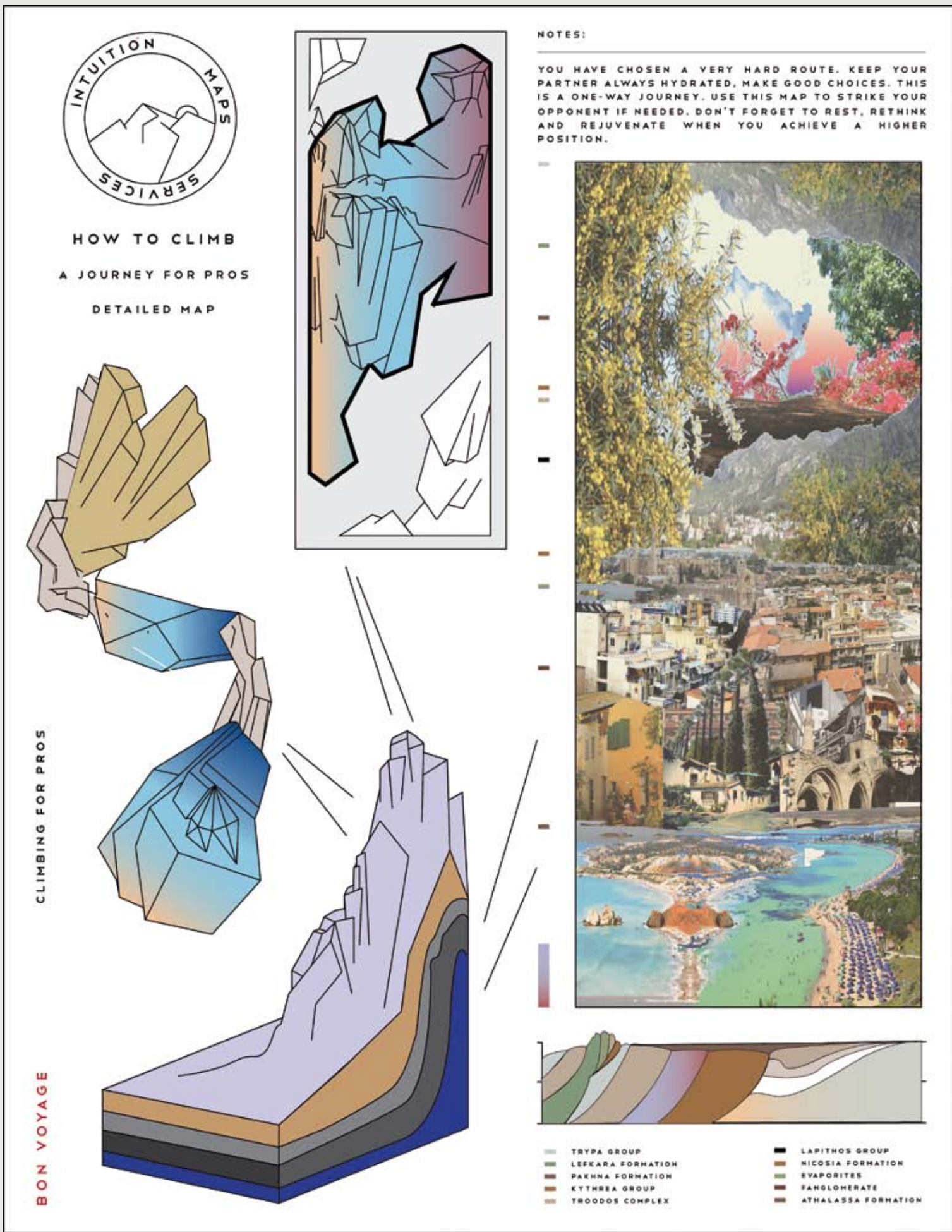
CHRISTINA SKARPARI

Christina is exploring the interconnectivity of the contemporary self with folk living of the past and exploring ways that the two combined can enable local sustainable development and social progress. She is currently doing her master’s degree in Communication Design at Central Saint Martin’s college of Arts & Design.

NICO STEPHOU

Nico Stephou was born in 1990 and has lived in Nicosia until 2010. He then lived in Berlin for a year and since 2011 he is based in Amsterdam. He is currently studying at Gerrit Rietveld Academie completing the second foundation year in Art & Design. In 2011, together with Evagoras Bekiaris, he founded XORKO Collaborative D.I.Y. Art Movement and has since been the Creative Director. Nico is also active as a DJ and producer with his solo project RAW SILVER and the bands The Black Post Project, Meltlights and Lucid. Recently he became the Graphic Designer of MJMJ Records in Minnesota, USA.

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## A Utopian Garden

by — Utopia Collectiva

[Eng]

“We believe in the educational value of the utopia, as it contrasts to the rigid conservation, as a necessary step from the passive acceptance of the world, to the ability to criticize it, to the promise to transform it”  
– Gianni Rodari, 1970

The idea of a garden is a type of utopia, a symbolic promise to revive and regenerate the authentic, organic relation with the earthling dimension of humans. We could say, according to Nietzsche, that the ‘dream of a garden’ is a product of the Apollonian spirit, through which the utopian possibility of a collective lifestyle, of a more equal and peaceful society, is projected. Obviously, the idea of a community garden is a utopia which can catalyze the internal and external fight that we experience in the multifaceted, postmodern era we live in. It’s a rationalised fantasy which does not disregard its complicated relation to reality.

**IT’S A FANTASY THAT IS NOT ARBITRARY, BUT TRANSFORMS INTO AN ALLEGORY AND AN EXAMPLE SHOWING THE POSSIBILITY FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A WORLD CONSISTING OF EQUAL AND FREE PEOPLE THAT RESPECT DIVERSITY.**

Planting gardens in an urban polluted space, with noise and hectic rhythms is, among other things, a therapeutic action. The garden is a *hortus conclusus*, it’s a fence that protects the “insides” from the violent invasion of the “outsides”, it protects our childhood memory, our collective experiences. The garden addresses our ideas and ideals, our ethics and our emotional values and memories. The garden becomes a place of the mind and the body, of meditation and conversation, of curiosity and quest for learning. It also gains an historical, philosophical and political context, it becomes a prototype for new alternative societal models that interact with the existing and future utopias.

The collective garden is a utopia that leans towards environmental restoration. Given that as a collective

and commonly used entity that is owned by everyone involved it grows to be a deposit for the future, an heritage for the next generations that now live under the discomfort of losing that “special place”, a collective identity that unites all cultures into a multinational meeting and exchange.

Creating community gardens is an act that usually utilises derelict pieces of land. The aim is to form green spaces in the urban landscape, in plots owned by the authorities or individuals, in order to utilise the land, benefit from it and develop a healthy community. Additionally the community garden can be used as an educational tool that advocates for an alternative, sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

Utopia Collectiva adopted the idea of creating a Community Garden in the heart of Nicosia as of last year. Our inspiration comes from similar projects abroad which try to tackle the problems of urbanisation through creation of alternative spaces for quality and healthy food production.

Today we live in a period of socio-economic uncertainty where our limited resources are at the point of being exhausted again by us, the humanity. We believe that during these times in particular, everyone and especially young people need to be adaptive and resilient. Therefore, through collective projects, we hope to share tools and knowledge that will enable people to take charge of their own daily needs in order to be able to establish an alternative and certainly a more sustainable way of lifestyle.

Utopia Collectiva has put in action the creation of a Community Garden in collaboration with the NGO Youth Power. The project started in April 2013 for a period of three months. The Garden is located in the “Linear Volunteers Park” in Kaimakli area, between V. Voulgaroktou and Smirnis streets (former railway track).

The three months are divided as follows, first month: *Organising + Designing + Planting*, second and third month: *Cutting + Utilising* the crops + *Holding* different activities. Four big events (each one dedicated to a different subject) have been planned. Our activities include: Building cobs, using upcycling scrap materials, baking bread, drying and preserving food, environment day (in collaboration with our Turkish-cypriot partners in the Youth Power program), Cyprus biodiversity, knitting, crochet and sewing workshops, nutrition, wellbeing and local herbs and finally a music and poetry day with Greek-cypriots and Turkish-cypriots poets and musicians.

The events will provide the audience with knowledge and tools to enable them to take control of their daily needs and to build a collaborative community of exchange and mutual respect. This way the attendees will become more

adaptive and rely more on themselves and the community. For every event we are collaborating with different NGOs, collectives, professionals and individuals to connect youth with experts.

For the implementation of the project we are inviting all persons, teams, organisations to get in touch with us for anything they can offer or help with.

## THE AXIS OF THIS PROJECT IS COLLABORATION.

Utopia Collectiva and the participants are collaborating at all stages. The participants get the chance to understand the importance of working together as a community and why self-sufficiency and organic agriculture are vital.

A blog is being set up (the link will be announced soon, until then watch facebook.com) about the project giving the opportunity together with our Facebook page for communication with all persons interested. Both will be updated with audiovisual and information material on a weekly basis.

After the completion of the project we will prepare a small digital publication with a summary of the activities and the results of the project which will be published online.

If you are interested in the project and want to get involved, get your gear and come to meet us at the Garden!

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### UTOPIA COLLECTIVA

Utopia Collectiva is based at the Utopia Shop, inside the walled city of Nicosia where all cultures meet. The collective was established on the first of January 2012 by a group of young people with similar beliefs and perceptions regarding lifestyle, nature and society.

Wellbeing is the main axis of our lives and we care about the environment and our relation to the community. Our aim is to promote and encourage a healthy, collective and sustainable way of living. We believe that education and personal development can bring about change and we respect nature and want to live in harmony.

Our space has been serving as a meeting point for every resident and person interested in environmental, sociopolitical and cultural issues. During the previous year we have been focusing on these issues, engaging people and spreading awareness.

We offer a peaceful space for people interested in organic agriculture, healthy diet, Yoga, educational workshops, lectures, fairs, screenings and music. We have space available for anyone who wishes to run events similar to the Collectiva’s philosophy and we are open to everyone whose interests meet ours.



## Greece: what the potato movement did next

by — Alexandra Saliba

[Eng]

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Even after securing billions in loans from the so-called ‘Troika’, the Greek economy continues to shrink at an alarming rate. Jobs are vanishing. Unemployment is double the euro-zone average and 55 per cent of people aged between 15 and 24 can’t find work. A quarter of the Greek population is now living in poverty – a proportion worse than Iran’s or Mexico’s. And with taxes rising, the minimum wage falling, and social welfare being withdrawn, it’s hard to see a bright side. But there is one.

Many Greeks are gradually coming to terms with the collapse of a failing social and political system. They are taking matters into their own hands and addressing crucial issues through grassroots activism and local collective action. There are signs of a lifestyle transformation, incorporating values and social patterns of the past. Old-style frugality and self-sufficiency are being interwoven with more contemporary ideas like sustainable living and ethical consumption. The diversity and spread of small collectives across Greece is showing us the power of collectivity and the potential for a transitional model to a new, smaller-scale economy, while the spontaneous emergence of horizontal, local structures reflects a desire for true democracy. Here are a few examples of initiatives I have investigated around Greece – and the main reasons for my optimism:



Local fair trade flour with the Without Intermediaries label

### What the potato movement did next: Without Intermediaries

In February 2012, members of the Pieria Prefecture Voluntary Action Group, based in the northern Greek town of Katerini,

launched the ‘potato movement’, as it was dubbed by the media. It started when members of the group who were travelling to Thessaloniki came across farmers who were giving away their potatoes for free. The farmers were protesting against the ruinous and humiliating purchase-price they were being offered by intermediaries. Voluntary Action Group member Elias Tsolakidis explains: ‘To express our solidarity with the farmers we decided to invite them to trade their products directly to consumers in our hometown, Katerini. In less than a day 24 tons of potatoes had been ordered through our website. We asked them what a fair price would be and we agreed on 0.25 cents a kilo – a third of the price in supermarkets.’ Now every three weeks farmers with a variety of agricultural products are invited to trade directly with 6,500 families in Katerini. ‘The movement is spreading across the country. We are aware of 45 collectives in different towns that are organizing impromptu markets at least once a month. Every day we receive dozens of emails from farmers who are willing to supply their products via our network,’ says Elias.

As the movement has expanded it has launched its own brand and label: *Without Intermediaries*. ‘It’s a way of showing that our movement has the power to manage its own supply chain like supermarkets do, while meeting the legal requirements by displaying the ingredients on the package. Under a common label we can now co-operate effectively with producers and other collectives around Greece.’ Now Without Intermediaries is undertaking contract farming for specific crops with pre-agreements on production and on the final price.

### Tackling suicide and social isolation – Klimaka and Syniparxsi

In 2012 the suicide rate jumped by around 50 per cent compared with the previous year, according to research from the Laboratory of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens. ‘People who commit suicide are often people who do not have access to psychiatric or medical care, and so, in that sense, the crisis has affected suicide rates,’ says Chara Spiliopoulou, head of the laboratory. In Athens, an NGO called Klimaka (Ladder) and a collective of mental health professionals called Syniparxsi (Coexistence) are offering psychological support services to individuals in need. ‘Since 2008, we have been operating a non-profit 24/7 suicide hotline. We have received thousands of calls. Recession and especially unemployment are contributing factors to suicide risk,’ says Aris from Klimaka. This is the only suicide helpline in Greece. ‘Klimaka’s hotline is very helpful in preventing suicides. It is important to

be able to talk to someone anonymously,’ comments Lanny Berman, president of the International Association for Suicide Prevention.

Meanwhile, Syniparxsi offers ongoing support. Therapist Linda Karali explains: ‘We provide five months’ free physiological support to people who are unemployed, homeless or who lack health insurance or face serious financial difficulties. We are psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers who felt a need to reach out to more people. Our support starts with one-to-one sessions and then we encourage our patients to continue with group therapy along with artistic group activities. Our principal aim is to fight social isolation.’

### An old haunt with a difference – dignity, solidarity and second-hand clothes

Despite its rich past and archaeological heritage, Akadimia Platonos is nowadays one of the most run-down neighborhoods in Athens. In 2008 a group of residents formed an open committee to protect the area’s green public spaces and archaeological sites from the construction plans of private investors. In response to the escalating crisis the committee has broadened its activities. Residents run a ‘solidarity haunt’ where people can find clothes, shoes, children’s toys, books and occasionally food supplies for free. It’s also a place where residents can hang out, read the newspapers or have a cup of coffee.

Athina is an economist who volunteers at the haunt every weekend: ‘We are not philanthropists. We are fighting to keep our dignity through solidarity. That is why we have a broad range of collective actions and activities – cultural, educational, environmental and so on. We understand the importance of community bonds. A 55-year-old unemployed woman approached me a year ago. She was desperate; she confessed that she would commit suicide. I am not a psychologist but I suggested she come and help us. Give yourself a year, I told her. She joined our collective and got it all out of her system.’ Athina’s 27-year-old daughter Lila makes her point clear: ‘We can’t just sit on our hands. We must act now.’

### From guerrilla tree-planting to time-banks – Exarchia’s residents keep innovating

Long before the current boom in open popular assemblies, a group of people living in the inner-city Athens neighborhood of Exarchia set up their own Residents’ Initiatives Committee. One of their outstanding achievements was to occupy a disused parking lot and transform it into a public park. With help from other groups, they managed, within

a few days, to remove the cement and plant trees. Exarchia residents hold open assemblies on a weekly basis to develop initiatives. Recently, they have been developing a time-bank whereby registered members have had the opportunity to exchange services using units of time as currency. The bank addresses not only basic needs but also services that people can no longer afford, such as foreign language lessons or physical workout sessions. Lawyers, architects and teachers are already interested.

‘You may participate in a time-bank to cover your needs but you gradually realize that it’s about being part of a solidarity network,’ says Aphrodite. Georgia remarks: ‘You get out of the house, you overcome your depression and you feel useful and creative again, especially if you are unemployed like me. You become part of a collective that respects equality in exchanges and moves away from the culture and the values of traditional money-based systems.’

### Ditching the euro the Votsalo way – with local currency

Local currencies have become popular in a few towns in Greece. Three months ago, another alternative currency called Votsalo (Pebble), popped up in Koridalos, a western suburb of Athens. It all started with a small group of 20 people and is now turning into an expanding network. Residents of Koridalos can register with the network through the Votsalo website but their account will be activated only as soon as they physically visit the weekly meeting of the network.

To start your transactions you receive 150 units of Votsalo and you can collect up to 300 units without any Euro involvement. Everything operates through an open source software (Cyclos) designed for this kind of ‘community banking’ that is also popular with other alternative currencies in Greece. Elena explains: ‘We have people with different specialties – artists, teachers and so on – but we have set food supply and health as priorities. We are in the process of contacting producers, farmers and medics and asking them to join Votsalo.’

### In the spirit of Che – collective cooking with rebel zest

Despite government efforts to ban collective kitchens some are still going strong. They offer quality food and politics. Take one of the oldest, the appropriately named El Che-f. Based in Exarchia, it serves a delicious lunch every Saturday noon. A group of professional and amateur cooks meet every week to discuss cooking and politics. They plan, budget, shop and cook nutritious meals

that everyone is welcome to taste. ‘We are a politically oriented collective, offering practical solidarity. We don’t do charity. Our kitchen is totally opposite to the concept of a soup kitchen,’ stresses a chef from the collective. During lunch people will get together, share tables and have friendly discussions. After all, the essence of El Che-f is about doing everything collectively. It’s not about mistreated people waiting in a handout queue for a ‘legal’ low quality lunch.

### Building utopia through self-sufficiency – Nea Guinea

‘We decided to start Nea Guinea because we noticed the lack of self-sufficiency skills in various fields such as energy, building, health, and even clothing,’ says Costas, one of its founders. Initiated three years ago, Nea Guinea is a collective that offers a variety of theoretical and practical workshops to give people the technical know-how they need to become more self-sufficient. Costas is in charge of the workshops for energy self-management, focused on the design and construction of small wind turbines, photovoltaic panels and small-scale hybrid systems with low-cost materials. Another member, Fotini, says: ‘We can’t claim that someone can be 100 per cent self-sufficient, especially in a city like Athens. But there can be a high level of autonomy, especially in food production or in simple pharmaceutical products that people can learn to make.’ She adds: ‘Nea Guinea started as an experiment but we have seen that many people have gained confidence in practicing self-sufficiency and hopefully they will influence other people as well. For example, one girl who attended the workshop on urban organic farming then managed to convince the residents of her apartment block to grow vegetable gardens on their terraces.’ For the collective, Nea Guinea is a distant destination. It’s a place in the future where respect and solidarity define the development of everyday human relations. ‘But through our daily practices, we try to ground this utopia, here and now,’ they say.

### Taking life in our own hands – from Syntagma Square to eco-living at Spithari

On a hill above Marathon in Attica is a transitional eco-community called Spithari. ‘We were all members of the Greek Zeitgeist Movement and we met each other at Syntagma Square during the protests of 2011,’ explains Fotis. ‘We soon realized that we shared common values and beliefs. That’s how we decided to take life in our own hands and create Spithari.’ Alexandra adds: ‘Basically, we envisioned our own society based on the

principles of sustainability, solidarity and self-sufficiency.’

Like Nea Guinea, members of Spithari (the name combines ‘spark’ and ‘clay pot’) strongly support the idea of diffusing knowledge and providing guidance towards a more sustainable and cohesive society. They also wish to act as catalysts for social change by triggering the genesis of more small, localized communities in Greece. ‘We intentionally chose to build our community near Athens. We offer workshops and openly invite people who are interested in setting up their own eco-communities to stay with us for a while and experience this way of living,’ explains Yiannis.

They maintain links with similar collectives both in Greece and abroad. Nea Guinea and Eurovillage helped them to install their wind turbine generator and volunteers from the Global Eco-village Network will be staying with them for a few months to help them with construction. So far, the residents of Spithari have succeeded in creating a sustainable habitat that provides on-site for most of the needs of their frugal lifestyle.

### What does it all mean?

For communities like Spithari, a viable future must involve consistent collective action and a radical reconsideration of our core values. Other groups I visited tend to see their activism as a social experiment that might suggest an alternative model of development. Only a few are worried that this might be nothing more than a temporary trend. But in the end, they all seem to share a similar vision: an economy based on solidarity, according to the values of co-operation, democracy, equality and equity.

There is a galaxy of such initiatives in Greece, with people inventing ways to overcome economic, social and environmental problems that the state seems unable to resolve. Similar initiatives are flourishing in other countries with troubled economies too. Simple but innovative and diverse, these grassroots actions could lead the way to a necessary shift from the dominant capitalist philosophy of growth to a more sustainable and fairer economy. But at the very least, they are, in an immediate and practical way, helping people survive hard times that have no apparent end in sight.

January 2013

ALEXANDRA SALIBA

Alexandra Saliba is a documentary filmmaker and blogger based in Athens.



## Synergies and collaborations — many players, one goal

by — The Cyprus Friendship Program

[Eng]

“IN A COUNTRY DIVIDED...  
PEOPLE UNITED”

### (A) BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Since 2009, an all-volunteer group of adults (mostly school teachers) from both sides of the divide have been bringing teens together from the Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking communities to build friendships. This effort, known as the *Cyprus Friendship Programme* (CFP), is a non-political, independent, people-to-people effort operating in the belief that, whatever the current or future political situation on the island, all will benefit from its future leaders having more understanding, trust, and friendships with one another.

Teens from the two communities are ‘paired’ in same-gender teams and each pair is hosted for one month in the summer by an American family. The American part of the project is managed by a non-profit organization, the *Cyprus Friendship Programme, Inc.*, which is based in the US. The Cyprus portion of the programme that involves peace-building activities all year round is run by a bi-communal team of Cypriot coordinators. The two groups cooperate harmoniously, driven by the same passion to promote a culture of peaceful coexistence. CFP, currently in its fifth year, has brought together 218 teens and their families.

### (B) HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS

→ Teenagers (15 to 18 years old) from both communities apply to join the programme after presentations are made in schools and youth clubs on both sides of the island.

→ Interviews are conducted early in the calendar year and the selected applicants are accepted into the programme in equal numbers from the two communities.

→ A series of meetings, with facilitated workshop activities, taking place in the spring, focus on leadership, communication, reconciliation and peace-building skills.

→ At the end of the workshops, each teenager chooses one person from the ‘other side’ of the same gender with whom he/she feels comfortable.

→ The relationships of friendship and trust created between the teenagers are typically very strong, especially after their month abroad and continue after their return.

→ The families of each ‘pair’ also ‘tune into’ this connection, forming equally strong bonds. It is only normal that the parents of each teenager would be interested in meeting the young person from the other community with whom their child has chosen to be roommates with for one month. It is also normal to have the wish to meet the family of this child. Very often, the circle becomes bigger with grandparents, uncles and aunts. In the summer, each pair of teenagers lives with host families in the United States, sharing a bedroom for four weeks and living as part of the host family.

→ Typically, strong bonds of friendship also develop between the teens and their host family that last well beyond the summer residential.

→ Another important aim of the residential aspect is to further advance leadership and peace-building skills, which were promoted during the programme activities that had taken place in Cyprus. This is carried out through four formal programme activities during the residential experience (team building, conflict resolution training, community service and environmental engagement).

→ The *Cyprus Friendship Programme* is not just a one-month trip abroad. The Cypriot coordinators of the programme organize activities and projects for the members throughout the year. The aim is to spread the message that reconciliation is possible and that these young people are living examples of this truth.

### (C) SYNERGIES AND COLLABORATIONS – MANY PLAYERS, ONE GOAL

For CFP to operate successfully, a very large number of deeply motivated volunteers offers long hours of service on both sides of the divided island of Cyprus and in the US. Each of the groups listed and described below partakes in a complex web of interrelated and overlapping actions.

Within their diversity there is a coherent unity based on the shared passion to make a contribution to the cause of citizen peace-building in Cyprus.

#### (1) THE CYPRIOT COORDINATORS

A bi-communal team of three Greek- and three Turkish-Cypriots meets regularly to plan and implement all the Cypriot-based activities of the

projects. They organize bi-communal presentations for mono-communal audiences in schools and youth clubs across the island. In many of these presentations they are supported by the CFP teenagers who display enthusiasm in sharing their experiences of peaceful coexistence. This work creates links and a network of CFP supporters including school principals and teachers. There is a deliberate attempt not to stay in the geographical and population centre of Nicosia but to reach out to other parts that are often neglected in the peace-building work.

The team collects and processes application forms, prepares and conducts the interviews, which are one criterion for selecting the individuals that will take up the available places each year. The team works closely together and initiates projects throughout the whole year in collaboration with all the groups described below.

#### (2) THE CYPRIOT TEENAGERS

Every year, on the day of the teenagers’ return to Cyprus, all the families await them at the airport, Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots applauding and cheering their children together. These teenagers enthusiastically start their alumni programme of peace-building activities and continue as strong long after their return. They meet regularly, both formally and socially, demonstrating to all that peaceful coexistence is possible in Cyprus. Despite being under a lot of pressure from school and exams, their commitment to peace-building work is exemplary. Here is a small sample of what they have been doing:

→ Radio and TV presentations of their peace-building work have been made several times. For example, a 20-minute CyBC TV programme focusing on the friendship of two of the teenagers received many positive reviews and was aired a second time on prime time.

→ Bi-communal presentations in schools and youth clubs on both sides of the island have been made despite the opposition by people who disagreed. The teenagers of the *Cyprus Friendship Programme*, showing courage and unrivaled commitment, continue their work with even more passion to help build a culture of peace. Bi-communal presentations by young persons to mono-communal audiences in schools is a very rare occurrence and, in this sense, the CFP are true leaders in opening new possibilities in the peace-building effort among the youth.

→ The 2009 group decided to ‘adopt’ a child from a Third World country by collecting and sending money every month; the child’s name is Dorica and she is from Malawi.

→ A programme of spreading creative ideas on how to live our lives in a more environmentally-friendly and sustainable way is currently being implemented.

→ The CFP teens treasure an old army helmet in which flowers have been planted. They have requested to meet the leaders of the two communities and present them with such a helmet as a gift. Their hope is that in the event of a solution and one where Cyprus will be demilitarized, the two leaders will give thousands of helmets to Cypriot families to use as flower pots and hang outside their houses.

→ A documentary is currently being filmed that aims to capture the main moments of the CFP journey over a 12-month cycle. Two pairs and their families are featured in this project.

→ One team of CFP teens has completed an 18-hour training programme with the *Cyprus Community Media Centre* (CCMC) on how to make films and will be working towards producing their own documentary.

→ The 2011 and 2012 CFP groups organized an important event in the geographical centre of Cyprus on a hill outside the village of Dhali. Their aim was to emphasize that both communities have suffered during the many years of conflict in Cyprus. A highlight was keeping a moment of silence for all who were lost.

→ The graduation ceremony each October is a highlight in the CFP calendar. For example, during the 2012 group graduation, there was an audience of 450 people from both communities comprising of the families and friends of the CFP teens as well as many supporters of the project. Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who is a great friend and supporter of CFP, sent us a special message that was read to the audience. The daughter of Martin Luther King, Bernice King, who had met and worked with our teens who were in Atlanta in July 2012, sent us a video message.

#### (3) CYPRIOT FAMILIES OF TEENS

The first peace-building action of each new CFP pair is to bring their two families together. More often than not, the process involves brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and, most interestingly, grandparents. Families of each pair typically become very close, inviting each other to their homes for a meal, meeting each other’s family members and sharing their hopes, daily lives and problems.

The connection formed between Cypriot families of the two communities, not only the ones of each pair, but of many others as well, is another dimension of the CFP experience. Parents are encouraged, at the start, to become

actively involved in CFP events. This creates the context for more bridge building and synergies between good people from the two communities who typically had no contact with the ‘other side’ before joining the programme. In April 2012, the bi-communal *CFP Parents and Friends Association* was formed after an initial meeting organized by the Cypriot CFP coordinators. The parents of the Association have been particularly active and supportive of the CFP projects on a day-to-day basis.

#### (4) CYPRIOT NGOS

The peace-building community in Cyprus has recognized the work of the CFP and there are currently a number of synergies being developed. For example, the *Cyprus Community Media Center* (CCMC) has come to an agreement with CFP with regard to a number of projects. Most prominently, a 12-month filming of a documentary has just been completed that focuses on the experience of two CFP pairs (one of boys and one of girls), their two families in Cyprus, their US experience as well as their activities before and after their stay in the US. The CCMC has trained eight CFP teens to use high-tech cameras and equipped them with the skills required to make documentaries.

CFP also closely cooperates with a very special group, the *Bi-communal Initiative of Relatives of Missing Persons and Victims of Massacres and War*. We have a common sensitivity on issues of forgiveness, each side acknowledging the pain of the other, of creating awareness among the young generation that we have all suffered on this island. Today (24th of March, 2013), within the frame of the second ‘pairing’ meeting of the 2013 group of CFP teens, we had five members of this NGO as guest speakers who shared their experiences with our teenagers and a number of their parents; an occasion within the context of an art exhibition inspired by the pain of the families of missing people on both sides.

#### (5) SCHOOLS ON BOTH SIDES OF CYPRUS

A very important aspect of the CFP work involves presentations held in schools. For most school students, the CFP presence offers their first opportunity to meet another teen from the other community. Even more importantly, a bi-communal presence in front of a mono-communal audience that finds it impossible to distinguish between the Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot teen is by itself a powerful erosion of the negative stereotypes that one community has of the other.

An increasing number of school directors, whom we can confidently

call friends and supporters of CFP, are very keen on inviting us every year for such presentations at the end of which we invite students to apply for the CFP. In every school, in addition to the principals, we form relations with teachers who also embrace and support our programme. They help us in setting up presentations by informing their students about the project and encouraging them to apply.

#### (6) PEACE-BUILDING ACTIVISTS IN CYPRUS

Some of the Cypriot coordinators have been in the field of citizen peace-building for as long as 20 years. During this time, they have made friends and connections with peace-building activists in many parts of the island. Now, CFP benefits from such contacts as the coordinators reconnect with these old friends and organizations. Many of these peace activists are regularly informed of the CFP work as they receive a ‘blind’ copy of e-mail messages sent to all the teens. The most valuable asset is the trust that exists between CFP coordinators and these people – a trust that is the result of sharing valuable peace-building experiences over many years. So when we are in need of help in any part of Cyprus, our friends are only a phone call away. In this way, CFP brings together a wide number of people who appreciate the work of CFP and its positive multiplier effects in the Cypriot population.

#### (7) THE ELDERS

In December 2009, the *Elders* organization chose the CFP group for the filming of a documentary about the missing persons of both communities. Two pairs were chosen after each pair had been interviewed. Three of the Elders, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Jimmy Carter and Lakhdar Brahimi spent three days filming with the four CFP teens. The official launching of the documentary took place in Nicosia and in London on the 8th and 10th of February 2011 respectively. The documentary was shown on TV stations on both sides of the island (also available online). Thousands of Cypriots were able to benefit from this inspiring project which embraced a combination of the wisdom of the Elders and togetherness and youth of four CFP teenagers.

#### (8) CYPRUS FRIENDSHIP PROGRAMME INC.

This is the NGO that is based in the US and deals mainly with the US part of the project. The members of CFP Inc. come from the US, Greece, Turkey, Northern

Ireland and the two communities of Cyprus. As far as the Cypriot activities organized by the CFP Cypriot coordinators are concerned, the board of CFP Inc. operates primarily as a resource for assistance and advice rather than dictating policy. Another very important function of the CFP Inc. Board is raising most of the funds required to cover the project's main expense which is that of our teenagers traveling to the US.

#### (9) AREA COORDINATORS, HOST FAMILIES AND ACTIVITIES OF CFP TEENS IN THE US

A large number of volunteers in the US, inspired by the common dream of contributing to the peace-building in Cyprus, use their energy and project their spirit of voluntarism that characterizes the work of CFP.

In 2013, host families will be located in five areas: Northern Virginia, Maryland, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Georgia. In each area there is an experienced and responsible coordinator who, among others, is responsible to find and approve the host families and prepare a programme of activities for the teens. Groups of 12 to 20 (6 to 10 pairs) will be allocated to each aforementioned area depending on the number of host families that are found. Cypriot families will be informed of the name and contact details of the area coordinator as soon as the area their children will reside in is known.

In each of the areas, the coordinator plans a number of group activities. Apart from the connection between the pairs and their host families, there is also the opportunity for strong group connections to be formed among all the teenagers. At least two times a week, the group of 12 to 20 teens meets for meaningful, educational and fun activities. Typically, the activities aim to inspire our participants how to become leaders in peace building, how to be sensitive and help others less fortunate than us, how to be responsible citizens of the world and care for the environment. The following are some examples of such activities:

→ In Maryland and Virginia, our young people spent a day with a non-governmental organization called *Bikes for the World*. They fixed old bicycles, put them in containers and sent them to teenagers of poor countries, who will in turn use them to ride to school instead of walking for hours.

→ In Portland, they visited several places where environmental sustainability is a priority. They learned how to responsibly and sustainably manage water, energy, our buildings and communities.

→ In Atlanta, they spent a few days at the *Martin Luther King Center* studying

the principles of non-violence, and also met and worked with Bernice King.

→ In New Hampshire, our teens worked with conflict resolution experts who were active in the CFPNI programme. Moreover, they worked with Alusine Kamara from Sierra Leone, who participated on the ground in the peace process after Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war. They spent the day at an intimate cultural centre in Peterborough developing communication skills and delving into the concepts of trust, justice and peace.

#### (10) ROTARY CLUBS IN CYPRUS AND THE US

The Rotary is a great supporter of the CFP work. For example, two clubs in Cyprus, one from each community, have pledged to jointly financially support the project for the summer of 2013. Similarly, many Rotary Clubs in the US are also very supportive. In many cases, area coordinators and host families are members of such clubs and create contacts, hold presentations and increase the network of supporters of this unique project.

#### (11) JOURNALISTS IN CYPRUS AND THE US

The journalistic community could not remain apathetic to the work of CFP. The teens and their coordinators have appeared numerous times on TV programmes in both Cypriot communities, spoken on the radio and given interviews to newspapers. The same applies with regard to the US as well as a number of international media.

#### (12) COMMUNICATION – THE CFP WAY

A very unique mailing list, maintained by one of the CFP Cypriot coordinators, has been in operation ever since the initiation of the CFP. These messages are like a living diary, where the CFP family, as we call it, regularly receives updates on the projects that are undertaken, the plans, the disappointments, but also the hope. The owner of the mailing list has compiled, for each of the four completed years of the project, an electronic document of these messages. This document (totaling 229 pages) is available upon request for scholars studying citizen peace building (send us your request at [nicosiew@spidernet.com.cy](mailto:nicosiew@spidernet.com.cy)).

#### NICOS ANASTASIOU

Nicos Anastasiou, an Economics teacher by profession, has been involved in bi-communal citizen peace-building work in Cyprus on a voluntary basis for the last 20 years. His work included bringing together, in the buffer zone, people from the two communities who, before the 1974 war, lived in mixed villages. He has contributed to the creation of a range of bi-communal groups involving educators, deaf people, dancers, musicians, and theatre enthusiasts. He has worked extensively with young Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots in an effort to create genuine friendships between them despite the generalized negative stereotypes that one community has of the other. He is currently the Greek-Cypriot principal coordinator of the Cyprus Friendship Programme, an all-volunteer project that 'pairs' together teens from the two communities in Cyprus, and subsequently brings together their families and friends. The programme is now in its fifth year of operation and its motto "In a country divided...people united" is a living experience for both the teens and their families. Bi-communal presentations by the coordinators and the teens of the programme are made all over Cyprus in schools, spreading the message that peaceful coexistence is possible in our divided island.

## The 'Latinterraneo' Network

[Eng]



Latinterraneo-Yemanja meets Aphrodite. An image from Latinterraneo's book intervention at Maroudias' exhibition, Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion (The Ethnological Museum), organized by Re Aphrodite as part of the project *In Crisis: Terra Mediterranea*, Nicosia Municipal Art Centre, Cyprus, 2012-2013. Latinterraneo presented a book that focused on the Afro-Brazilian Goddess Yemanja and her relationship to the sea in juxtaposition to the Cypriot ancient Goddess Aphrodite (who was born out of the sea), so as to challenge and better understand how stereotypes are experienced across cultures. This inter-cultural collaboration used the theme of Aphrodite as symbolising her journey from the Near Orient (Sumerian Inanna, Semitic Ishtar) and her appropriation by the locals. Aphrodite's birth is found more in the movement of faith and its reinterpretation and representation on a local level. The same applies to Yemanja, the Goddess of the sea, who is part of the Afro-Brazilian Umbanda religion. An African mother Goddess, Yemanja, the virginal queen of the sea, represents the migratory journeys from Africa to the American Continent, from the 16th to the 19th century. She carries with her past and mystical practices and shows layers of religious symbolism through time. Looking through the position of artist as ethnographer, Latinterraneo reflect on the fetishization of Oriental and Indo Occidental cultures and their representation in cultural and tourist practices. This book intervention falls in line with the aim of Latinterraneo to attempt to shake us out of the insulation of our own histories and to remember that parallel histories can be read through objects of daily use, through tourist routes and echoes from the past.



Latinterraneo (The Latiteranneo platform was initiated by a group of young theorists and practitioners from Brazil and Cyprus. Its name is a word play combining ‘Latin America’ and the ‘Mediterranean’) is an initiative currently in its initial stages which acts as a platform for the production, exchange and assimilation of multi-disciplinary knowledge in relation to the regions of Latin America and the Mediterranean. It brings together academics, artists, writers and activists from the two respective regions and deals with the perspectives, relationships and local notions of each respective culture to its own region and to one another. The network highlights the variety of worlds that exist within these two geographical areas. It avoids generalisations, assists relationship building through cultural means and encourages critical thinking. This platform of interchange, collaboration and exploration is being carried out through a broad range of disciplines and thematic axes, thereby assisting not only in the creation of inter cultural dialogue and debate but also fostering inter-disciplinary exchange.

Latinterraneo will act as a mechanism that will promote a dynamic and interactive analysis of Latin American and Mediterranean issues so as to enable the creation of a collaborative network that can provide assistance in the development of a shared agenda and common actions and projects between cultural practitioners and theorists from these two complex regions.

## THE LATINTERRANEO NETWORK WILL OPERATE THROUGH:

→ The creation and maintenance of a website that will be updated with opinion articles, news and other information related to the Latin American and Mediterranean regions. The network members will be encouraged to communicate cross culturally and across disciplines, assisting inter-cultural collaboration and reflection. The research projects and other initiatives

that the platform will undertake will be based on these dialogues and exchanges.

→ The establishment and development of research lines to guide and nurture the production of knowledge. Connecting subjects and elements in order to enhance our understanding of current happenings in Latin America and the Mediterranean and the socio-cultural, artistic and political-economic dimensions of these occurrences in both regions.

→ The promotion and implementation of an exchange programme of researchers from the Latin American and Mediterranean regions, allowing and therefore further supporting inter-regional, joint and collaborative production of knowledge and sharing of experiences. This will be achieved by fostering regional training partnerships, institutional mobility of researchers-visitors and/or joint inter-regional publications.

→ An intercultural exchange that focuses on the development and realization of artistic and cultural projects that demonstrate and showcase the research that is undertaken by this trans-Atlantic platform. These projects will involve artists, academics and cultural practitioners from different locals within the two large geographical areas and they will promote collaboration through the arts so as to encourage relationship building and cross-cultural dialogue.

## ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE DEVELOPED BY LATINTERRANEO:

→ The organisation of an annual international seminar/workshop as a way of bringing together participating researchers and their respective disciplines; thus assisting in defining the direction of the platform. This it to be carried out over a 12 month period, in order to promote the dissemination and debate regarding the on-going and/or finished academic/professional studies of the network. A publication of the proceedings will follow.

→ The organisation of visual art exhibitions and other creative arts initiatives that reflect the research direction of the platform and that enable mutual understanding and rapprochement through creative practices. The platform will apply to participate in international art festivals that are held in both regions, such as Mercosur Biennial, Istanbul Biennial, etc.

→ The organisation of lectures and discussions that enables the dissemination and enlargement of the

network, using online platforms and networks.

→ Publishing a journal and/or collections of academic articles, opinion pieces and artistic material in printed and online formats.

## THE FIRST PROJECT OF THE LATINTERRANEO NETWORK IS:

*Invisible Walls x Real Walls: patterns and perceptions of segregation in Latin America and the Mediterranean.* If you are interested in collaborating, participating or you simply want to know more about the project please contact Aleksander Aguilar Antunes (antular@hotmail.com) or the Latinterraneo team (latinterranean@gmail.com).

## Group 102

[Eng]

Özge Ertanın (visual artist), Oya Silbery (visual artist) and Evren Erkut (graphic designer) have been working together as Group 102 since 2009. They were named Group 102 after Özge Ertanın's room No. 102 at the Great Inn (Büyük Han) in Nicosia, which they initially used as an exhibition and arts centre. They opened their first exhibition using the concept ‘First Lot’ in 2009. However, the Great Inn gradually lost its character and appeal as a centre for art. Consequently, the Group decided to continue their work at the studio belonging to Özge Ertanın and Oya Silbery. The Group has accomplished more than 15 projects and two exhibited works to date. Coming from different disciplines, the group members create their works based on the issues and realities of the society in which they live in. The Group forms its projects through the use of conceptual art and video installation.

When we look at the recent history of Cyprus what we see is a political issue unsolved for almost 40 years, which has not only caused the disintegration of the island's communities but also created an abundance of other critical social issues within its divided society. We, as islanders born after 1974, were shaped within the gloomy atmosphere that was a result of this political situation. For those of us living in the North of the island the issue of identity and being isolated from the rest of the world is crucial and, although perceived as fairly normal by some, is actually an exceptional and wholly depressive situation.

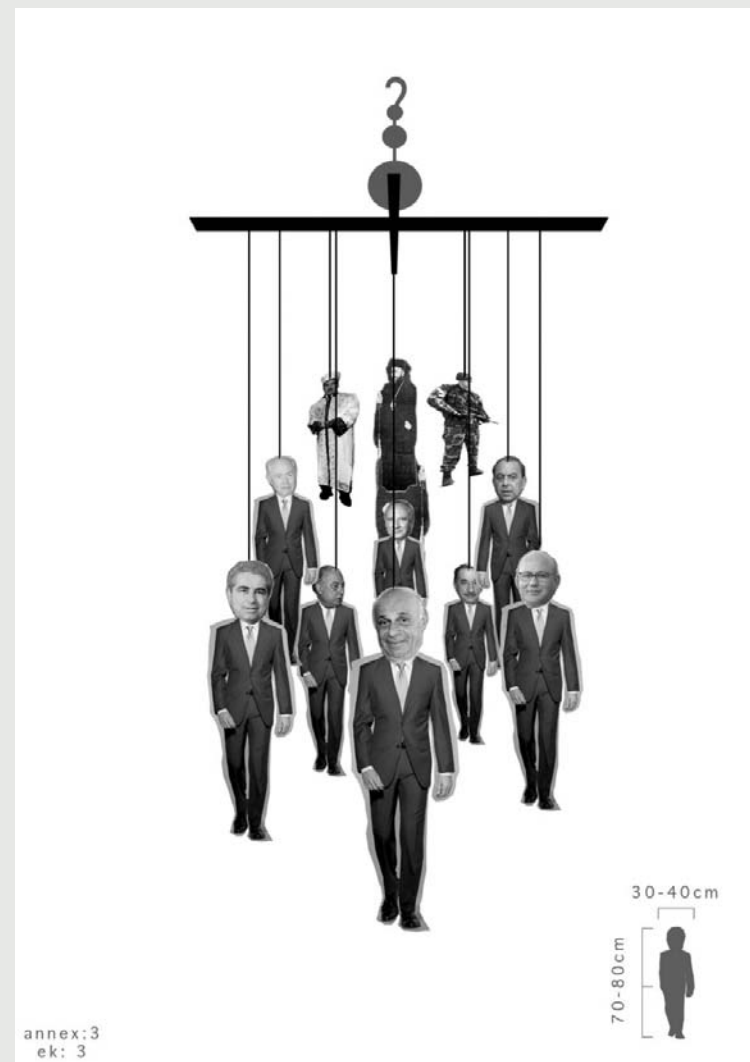
Naturally, as artists and members of this unrecognised nation, we couldn't remain indifferent to the realities and significant problems affecting our society. Even though we tackle diverse matters and topics in our individual works, when we are working together we try to unify our concerns in order to deal with common issues. This is the predominant reason why the works of the Group are mostly social and political. The majority of our works are adapted from events of everyday life, games and pastimes. We continually endeavour to reflect on the influence of what is being daily experienced by utilising art to communicate and express this.

The subject or concept of our project based work can sometimes be generated from a material, an observation or simply a thought from a member of the Group. Our projects are developed through discussions, debates and comparisons of our ideas and opinions. Our works are ultimately carried out by agreeing and assigning specialised tasks to each other in the production stage. The combination of our individual differences and qualities is a source of enrichment for our collective co-operation.

### ← SWEET DREAMS (2010)

A project based on false promises that were made to appease us and prolong our sleep. An installation incorporating a baby mobile and various Turkish and Greek Cypriot presidents of Cyprus. When the mobile is in operation it rotates to the sound of a lullaby.

Scale model shown in the video:  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4UFDTuTDww

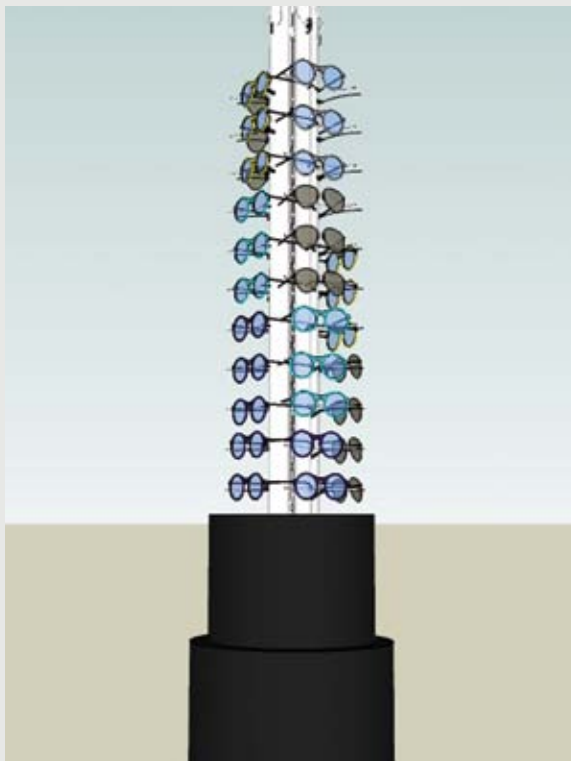
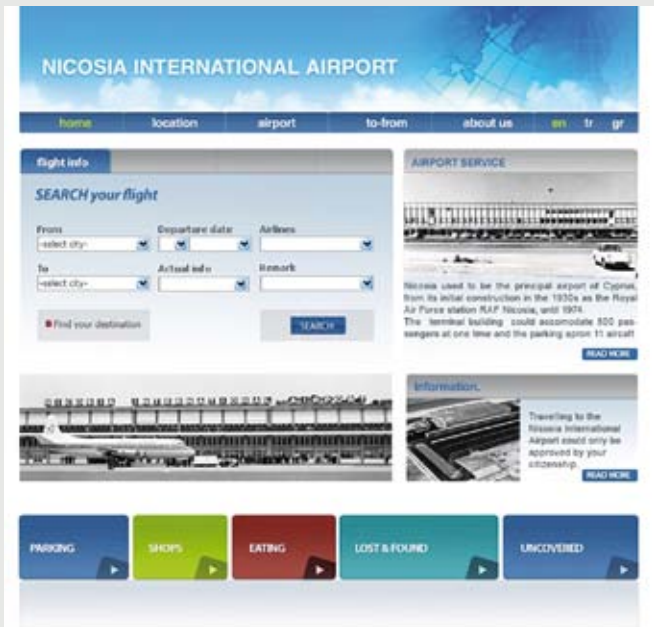


[WWW.NICAIRPORT.COM](http://WWW.NICAIRPORT.COM) (2011) →

An online bi-communal project by Oya Silbery and Özge Ertanır for UNCOVERED.

For this project we decided to concentrate on the local and international transportation problems in Cyprus, referring to unresolved historical issues. We created the Nicosia International Airport website.

UNCOVERED is a three-year research-based art project divided into two phases. Its areas of investigation stem from the deteriorating condition of the UN-controlled deserted Nicosia International Airport. The project aims to explore notions of memory, common ground and control mechanisms. Lying abandoned inside the buffer zone, off-limits to the local communities, Nicosia Airport represents a spatial order generated by UN control in the context of a protracted conflict between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. The once-bustling Nicosia Airport served as the central port of entry and departure for a newly independent country in the wake of post-colonialism. The project explores how this area, frozen in time and space, indicates and exposes the operational and organisational logics of control that have evolved on the island over the past decades and asks questions that move beyond the ever-present reminder of pain, in order to ultimately understand and reclaim the island's common ground.



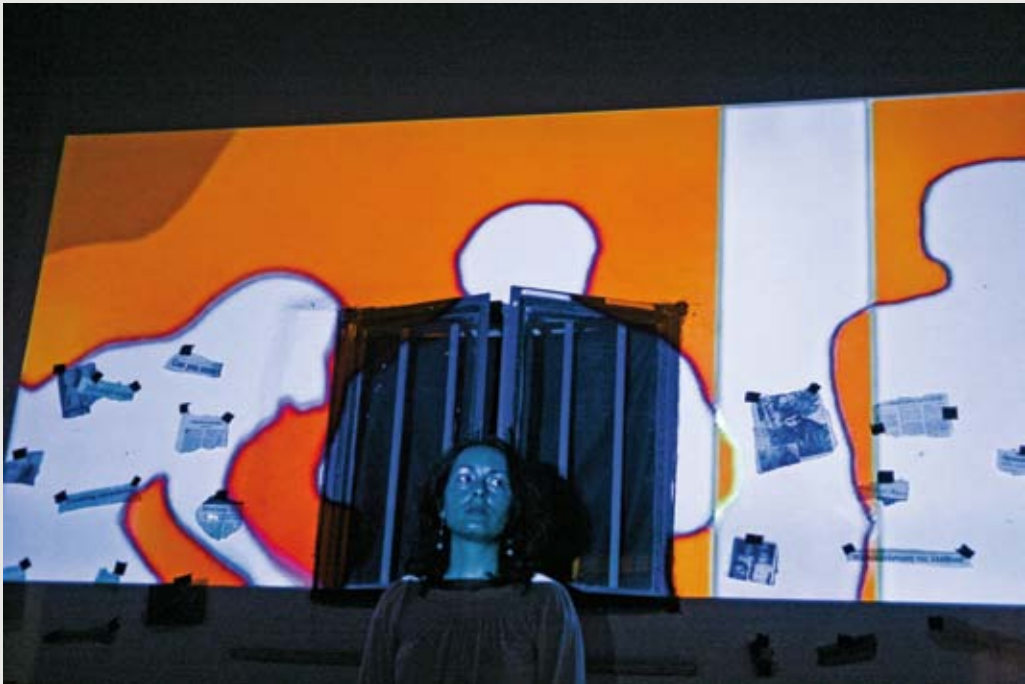
[APHAKIA](#) (2013) ↑

This project is comprised of 50 pairs of eyeglasses which the viewers can wear. Pictograms, photos and pictures concerning the buffer zone are placed inside the glasses, obscuring vision, indicating the limited extent to which the two societies can see behind the walls and barriers of the buffer zone.

## Collaborative Dramaturgy

by — Ellada Evangelou

[Eng]



'The Hand Diaries: An Exhibition' (a 15-person collaborative dramaturgy), Rooftop Theatre Group, 2012. Photograph by Panagiotis Mina.

Traditional playwright considers the consistent and continuous narrative voice as one of the bases of a good story. The play offers the viewer a story coming from the mind of one author, insinuating that a second pair of eyes would compromise its authenticity and singularity. Romantic practices in the nineteenth century enforced the role of the single author as the tormented soul of a (usually male) playwright destined to fill the blank paper with passionate strokes reflecting the depth of despair and kismet. The relationship between playwright and text were elevated to apocalyptic levels.

The twentieth century, with its modernist and post-modernist practices, has generated a debate regarding this (and many other) 'holy grails'. Practices of theatre for social change and devised theatre were instrumental in tilting the scale in favour of, what was initially considered experimentation, the opening up of the creative process of playwright to groups larger than one person. Collective dramaturgical creation took different shapes and forms incorporating varied methodologies for generating texts: engaging actors and non-actors through improvisation, working with pieces of (existing) literature or singling out something as basic as an emotion.

Things have made substantial leaps since the beginning of the twentieth century in respect to collaborative dramaturgy. Devised theatre has become a mainstream approach to theatre and drama and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is standard practice in conflict resolution and peace education all over the world. Both methods have substantial literature attached to them and practitioners can easily get a fair idea of their principles and practices.

An important aspect of the use of collaborative dramaturgy, beyond its standardization and trendiness in recent years, is for the theatre practitioner to be clear as to why s/he needs to work with a group to generate a dramatic text. In each context this is determined by two factors: the internal (dramatic) and the external (social) factors. The desired nature of the text reflects the many dramatic voices interactively engaging with the multiple voices of society. Failure to understand the essence of the interplay between the voices of the text and the voices of society creates a disassociation between what is being said and how it is being said, risking becoming 'art for art's sake'.

### ELLADA EVANGELOU

Ellada Evangelou is a dramaturge and researcher. Her studies include English literature, linguistics and dramaturgy. She is currently completing her doctoral thesis on Greek-Cypriot dramatic production in the post-1878 era and its relationship to national identity. She is generally interested in the relationship between cultural production and societal trends. She has worked as a dramaturge, director, educator and workshop facilitator. She is co-founder and resident dramaturge at the collaborative dramaturgy Rooftop Theatre Group (2004).

[www.rooftoptheatregroup.com](http://www.rooftoptheatregroup.com)



## Proposal for Work and Tumble (2013) Choreographic Device for Situated Gestures

by — Laura McLardy & Lorenzo Sandoval

[Eng]



### LAURA MCLARDY

Laura McLardy (b. 1984, London) studied Fine Art and History of Art at Goldsmiths and as a Master's student of Olafur Eliasson at the Institute for Spatial Experimentation in Berlin. She has been awarded a fellowship at Academy Schloss Solitude in 2013 and participated in international exhibitions, including Berlin 2000-2011: Playing Amongst the Ruins at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2011, The Great World Fair – The World Is Not Fair, Tempelhof Airport, Berlin, 2012, and Handlungsbereitschaft, Motorenhalle, Dresden, 2013. In 2012 she published the first issue of her series Points in Line, themed and titled "Linear Movement".

### LORENZO SANDOVAL

Lorenzo Sandoval (Madrid, 1980) is a cultural producer and independent investigator focusing on collective processes and self-managed organizations from the point of view of artistic creation and curating. He holds a B.F.A from the UPV (Universitat Politècnica de València) and a Masters in Photography, Art and Technology, with a scholarship from the attending University. He has had international

residencies in Berlin (GlougauAIR), Vila Nova, Portugal (for the University of Porto), and in Nairobi (Kuona Trust Studio); was production manager in the EACC (Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castelló) and assistant in the Maribel López Gallery. He is one of the founding members of the independent space Altes Finanzamt. In this space he commissions the exhibition programme. As commissioner, he prepared the project Visualizing Transnationalism within the framework of the Transeuropean Festival. He won some curatorial prizes like: Around is impossible, in La Casa Encendida (2011); (...) Science, Territory and Subjective Narratives for the Can Felipa commission prize and Case Report for Nogueras Blanchard (both 2012). He also curated The Rescue of the Effects. Notes for a theory of the reader at General Public (2012); Field Studies, Altes Finanzamt (2012) and Osmosis, together with Gabriela Acha, Club Transmediale Vorpel. He also participated in some collective shows like <Circuito:Berlin> at Instituto Cervantes (2012); Say it Loud. On words and actions at District (2012) and Handlungsbereitschaft, together with Laura McLardy, Motorenhalle, Dresden (2013).

## Terrarium

by — Eleni Bagaki & Maria Anastassiou  
& Alexandros Pissourios

[Eng]

Eleni Bagaki, Maria Anastassiou and Alexandros Pissourios are three artists who have come together in the past year to collaborate on site specific projects. Their interests overlap in relation to the sense of place, materials, forms of collaborations and augmented practices.

Terrarium will be their first site specific project that will be produced and presented at 'Phytorio' as part of the Visual Artists Association 2013-14 program. It is a four week programme during which the site will operate as an open studio for the first two weeks and the last two weeks will conclude with a presentation of the completed work. Essentially, their attempt is to challenge and open up the default relationship of the audience and the work (or exhibition space), inviting the audience to be present during research, production and exhibition. They will be using various mediums, such as photography, 16mm, video, collage and drawings to document and respond to the properties of the site such as textures, surfaces, light, air, smell, temperature, transparencies, colours and reflections.

They chose CYD as the platform to initiate their collaboration and share their research material as a prelude to this upcoming project.



### ELENI BAGAKI

Eleni Bagaki was born in Crete, in 1979. She completed her MA Fine Art course at Central Saint Martin's (London) in 2006. Most recent exhibitions include her solo show NO EYES NO SOUL at Vitrina Project, Athens (2013), the group show LUSTLANDS: a family noir under the sun and other experiences, curated by Nadja Argyropoulou at FAMILY BUSINESS, New York (2013) and Thessalonika (2012), and also the group show New Somatography, 50-1 gallery, Limassol (2012). She has participated in and co-curated numerous pop-up exhibitions such as Sex, Birds and Rocks, a solo show at LUST magazine's offices, Wild Wild Wilderness, a two-person show with Maria Anastassiou, Praxitelous 33, With and Without You, a two-person show with Nikos Gaganis, Trianon Centre, and One Night Stand, a group show at Praxitelous 5 (all in 2012). Other exhibitions include BODY/ SCREEN, Municipal Art Gallery of Chania (2012), Art & Technology-Man and Machine, Olive Press Art Factory, Chania (2010), The Painting Room, Transition Gallery, London (2008), Quixotic Vision, Dollinger Art Project, Tel Aviv (2007), Body Extensions at the Museum of Contemporary Art & Design, Switzerland (2005). In 2007 she was the recipient of the ISIS Art prize and also nominated for the Celeste Painting Prize. Furthermore, she has contributed her work to various art publications such as Art-Lit (2013, Athens), Tunica Publication (2012, NY), LUST (2012, Athens). In 2013 she founded with curator Zoe Charaktinou the collaborative project ZINO. She currently lives and works in Athens.

### MARIA ANASTASSIOU

Maria Anastassiou is a film and video artist, originally from Cyprus and now living in London. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2010 and has since shown work in the UK and Europe. Screenings and shows include 2013: Here & Now, as co-curator and featured artist, Horse Hospital, London. 2012: Trans-Art, Art Festival in Cavan, Ireland. 2011: Wild, wild wilderness, site specific two person show with Eleni Bagaki in Athens, Greece; Art-Athina, represented by APOTHEKE, art-fair in Athens, Greece; Here, this time, a terrible beauty, solo show at APOTHEKE Contemporary Arts, Nicosia, Cyprus, curated by Demetris Taliotis; Cinema Corporel, at Arch Z, Granary Wharf, Leeds, curated by Joanna Byrne. 2010: The Plaza Principle, group show, at Former TK Maxx unit, Leeds Shopping Plaza, Leeds, curated by Chris Bloor and Derek Horton; Lightyear Foundation at The Science Museum, London, Acoustic Images, BFI, London. 2009: Moon Landing, Islington Mills, Manchester; Palimpsest, group screening and DVD launch, London; Tail-Devourer, Civic Room Gallery, London, curated by Ximena Garrido-Lecca. 2008: on Tank-Tv website with video: Liquid Light, Rotoreliefs at the Roxy Bar and Screen, London. 2007: Rushes, Soho Short film festival, London. In 2010 she co-founded the film project 'Unravel: The Longest hand painted film in Britain' that went on to win the Deutsche Bank Award for Art 2010 and tour the UK extensively visiting institutions such as the BFI, Tate Britain, Chisenhale Gallery, Turner Contemporary Margate, Ikon Gallery Birmingham, CCA Glasgow, Picture This Bristol, and many more. In 2012 she co-founded 'Collective-iz', a London-based filmmakers collective creating platforms for making and showing expanded cinema. In 2009 she was awarded a prize from Tank Tv for her video work. In 2011 she was Resident Artist at the Pop-Up Shop Scheme for the Camden Council, London, and in 2012 a Resident Artist at TransArt, for the Cavan County Council, Ireland.

### ALEXANDROS PISSOURIOS

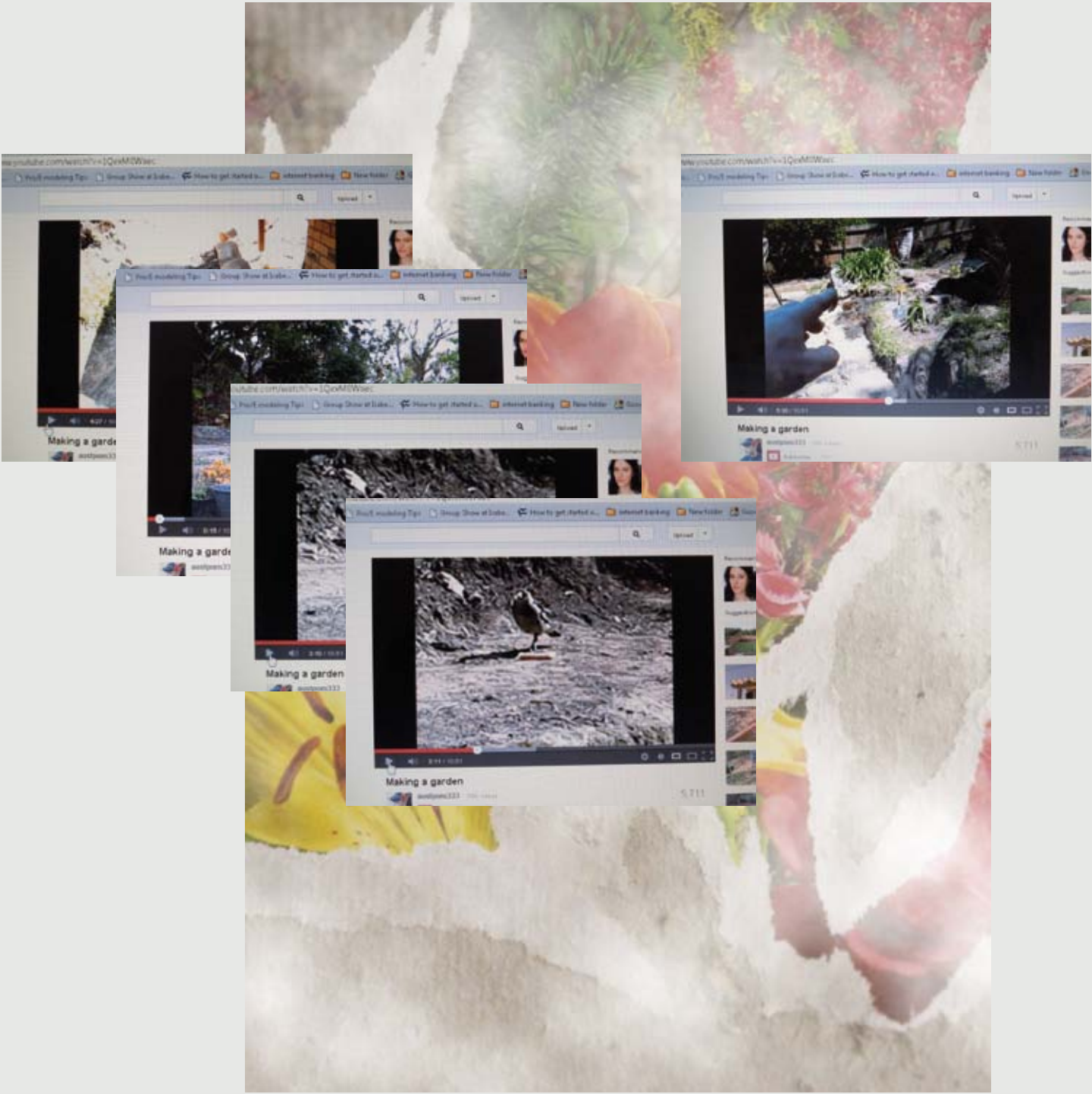
Alexandros Pissourios was born in Limassol, Cyprus, in 1982. He studied at the University of Brighton and, after completing his Bachelor's degree, he continued at the Royal College of Art in London for an MA in Communication Art and Design. His work has been featured in group exhibitions including New Somatography, 50-1 gallery, Limassol (2012), To build a garden, Visual Arts Association, Nicosia (2012) curated by Elena Parpa, Reveries of WILL, curated by Polys Pestlikas at Vamiali's Gallery in Athens (2011), Pop Nouveau at Isnogallery in Nicosia (2011), Notes to self, Omikron Gallery in Nicosia (2010) curated by Elena Parpa. His work has also been featured in performances and screenings such as If not now, online project on Legion-Tv.com (2013), LUX/ICA Moving Image biennial, ICA, London (2012), Fringe! Film Festival, London (2012), On Site, at the Barbican, London (2011) directed by Sophie Clements and Nell Catchpole, the 25th London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival at the British Film Institute, London (2011), curated by Ben Walters, Equator Project at the St.Lukes church in London (2008), Video is the only constant at Corsica Studios in London (2010) and Acoustic Images at the British Film Institute in London (2009). He currently lives in London.





Eleni Bagaki & Maria  
Anastassiou & Alexandros  
Pissourios

Terrarium





## Oneness

by — Despina Rangou & Theodoulos Polyviou

[Eng]

We recognize ourselves like entities, individual beings taking up spaces, socially interconnecting, and collaborating. We fuse our energy in social constructions of identity, which fuel our desire for authenticity and definition. Collaboration, could constitute a ‘new’ self, through embracing the ‘other’ as part of us.

Through interaction and repetition, we assimilate behaviours that we then perform, through styles of speech and gestures, within habitual actions, referring in this way to a cultural performance. Our vision, depicted in this diptych, eliminates distinction – we always identify with something on every no-thing. Our ideology diminishes duality, and rather shares the possibilities of unity embodying a unique entity. We achieve this by projecting fragments of our identity on to our mere, fellow self. This parallelism of beings is the true essence to rationalising solutions for our alchemical, status quo.



### DESPINA RANGOU

Despina Rangou is a visual communicator studying at the Royal College of Art, in London. Her philosophy is being informed by our world of global wealth, power, and images, where the search for identity, collective or individual, credited or constructed, becomes a fundamental source of social meaning. Despina’s work is concerned with the depiction of identity, which is becoming the main, and sometimes only, source of meaning in a historical period characterised by widespread destruction of organisations, delimitation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions.

### THEODOULOS POLYVIU

Theodoulos Polyviou is on the MA programme in Visual Communications at Royal College of Art.

## Scenario for a performance

by — Lito Kattou & Leontios Toumpouris

[Eng]

There are two carpets, one in the living room and one in the kitchen.

The first one is blue. It is a wide blue surface. With his brothers, they swim in it. The other one is a hairy moquette with blond, brown and beige tufts. The hairs emerge and return back to the carpet continuously.

I can imagine him combing them with his fingers. He excoriates them upwards and then tamps them down, back in smoothness. As if somebody walks on mid grown grass.

It is a summerish ambiance.

He steps out from the kitchen’s backdoor. He sits on the marbled first step of the staircase. The rest of the stairs are made of concrete.

Now he can feel dew.

His mother comes and sits next to him. She is holding a yellow to orange egg cup; it has the size of a bread’s slice. It was the first time he was not going to eat a completely solid egg. He feels the unprecedented feeling of the soft boiled egg, the summer breeze.

Euphoria.

Next his grandmother comes to the doorstep. He opens his mouth as she brings a spoon near to his lips. He feels the taste of soft boiled egg with Farine Lactée.

Juicy and warm, the beige moquette, euphoria.

The summer. When he was four or five, they used to have a carpet in the kitchen. A brown carpet that looked like tufts of hair coming out from the carpet and going back in. Blond and brown hair; and beige, in the kitchen. In the living room a blue carpet. His brothers and he pretended it was the sea and they swam in it. On the brown carpet in the kitchen; he remembers playing and eating. The summer, one main door. Two more doors, the one leading to the rest of the house, the other to the garage. A small narrow storage room, a door and then the concrete staircase, leading downstairs to the garage. The garage was cool in the summer, they opened the door leading to the garage, his mum advised him to sit down on the first

step, not the concrete one, the marble one before the concrete ones, slightly higher than the rest. They sat there. He was alone, the rest in the house; his brothers. They sat on the marble. She brought the yellow-orange eggcup, broke the egg, and then the unique sensation of the runny egg. He was impressed he was eating an egg not exactly solid. He remembers her feeding him. The sensation of the summer breeze and the cool marble and the egg in his mouth, wet and warm. A sensation of euphoria for a reason he couldn’t explain or understand; and the brown carpet, brown and blond and beige. On the marble stair the sounds change. The empty garage alters the sounds. When the garage door opened his voice changed. The appealing sound of his echo. He thinks he still has the eggcup, saw it somewhere lately. Yellow-orange, in the size of a slice of bread, in the middle the egg holder and on the left and right curved surfaces where he could place a spoon or some bread.

In the afternoon. She remembers sitting in the house. On the kitchen floor. Outside was quiet. He was walking up and down, doing something. Sitting all by herself. Quiet. Boredom. She wanted some attention. As soon as she got the chance she stood up right in front of him. Face to face. They played this game quite often. No, no, it wasn’t a game. He held her by her hands or above her elbows. She stepped on his feet. He started walking. She had her back turned towards their destination, usually her bedroom at the end of the hallway on the right. If she lost balance, he would help her stand properly on his feet. She had to be still and steady to help him carry her. He wasn’t strict with rules. They stopped somewhere between the dining room and the living room. She remembers his black leather shoes he usually wore.

She is looking at him. While sitting in an armchair.

There is light outside. Calmness, stillness, bright neutrality. No sounds, no smells.

She only looks at him in her immobility. Apathy.

He is walking in lines across the room.

*I want to walk too, she thinks. Beside him in the same directions. No. Opposite him in my own directions. No. I feel heavy.*

She stands up and walks towards him. He stops and rests still. She stands in front

of him face to face. He is taller. She places her hands on his shoulders. She leans on them. She gives weight to his shoulders. As she grasps, she places her right sole gently above his foot. His foot is expectedly larger. She does the same with her left sole.

Now she is stepping on his toes.

Walk, she says.

Scenario for a performance is part of Untitled Dualism, a collaborative project in progress by visual artists Lito Kattou & Leontios Toumpouris.

The artist, in his effort to acquire conscience of his identity, addresses the Other. The elliptic dimension of the Other does not induce the desired result, the fulfillment, the coverage of the void. He becomes aware of his inability to realize this desire and through creation he attends to fantasy, in order to escape from the sizzling real. The artist, in order to fulfill his void, produces artwork. Lito Kattou and Leontios Toumpouris examine if the conjunction of the two voids is a method by which the void can be tolerable. Could two voids converse, interact, associate, converge so that new equalizations and results would arise? In which ways the procedure of the artwork’s production is affected by the association of the two voids, the two subjects? In what degree this relation is perceivable by the viewer? How can the converged voids be visually and conceptually translated through dipoles as real – imaginary, visual – intellect, natural – artificial, handmade – industrially made, internal – external, familiar – unfamiliar?

### LITO KATTOU & LEONTIOS TOUMPOURIS

Cypriot visual artists Lito Kattou (b. 1990) & Leontios Toumpouris (b. 1982) graduated from Athens School of Fine Arts. They live and work between Athens, Greece and Nicosia, Cyprus.

## Dionysus and the rejection of the Other

by — **Dimitrios Tsouris**

[Eng]

Dionysus, conceived in his mother's womb but ultimately born from the thigh of Zeus, is known as the 'twice born', the bringer of wine to the world, travelling endlessly through many countries in order that all may partake of this new liquor. His spectacular entourage with lions resembled a triumphal procession. Those that opposed him were severely punished, but those who received him hospitably were bestowed with gifts and rewards. During his travels, Dionysus became a roving, itinerant god embodying the notion of being everywhere and nowhere, of belonging and not belonging. Wherever he travelled there were those that worshiped him so fervently and, as if a contagious disease, almost epidemic, his worship spread like a flood. The need to be acknowledged wherever he passed, his prestige and position as a god, must always be rendered to him. Finally Dionysus, son of Zeus and Semele, returns to his birthplace Thebes, to establish his cult.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to his city after many years, he enters as a stranger, a foreigner, his appearance different, somewhat unsettling, disconcerting, anomic. Refusal by the Theban population to acknowledge Dionysus as their god brought dire and terrible consequences resulting in madness and death. The ongoing divide brought by the conflict among the locals, the status-quo and preservation of identity, in contrast with the need to accept and welcome the alien, the stranger and, ultimately, the 'other', could not bring about any resolution or possibility of reconciliation.

THIS REJECTION OF THE STRANGER,  
REJECTION OF THE 'OTHER',  
BROUGHT ABOUT DISPUTE  
AND DISORDER TO THE POPULATION  
OF THEBES.

Those who embodied the unconditional attachment to the unchanging preservation of their value system against all attempts to recognize whatever was 'other' from themselves, the refusal to listen to any outside communication, the inability to empathize with those outside, were met with intolerable and wretched catastrophe.

The inability of those that refuse to understand themselves differently away from their superiority, where there is a reticence to seek alternatives, become the fallen and topple into derangement, into horror, into monstrosity and consequently lose their own identity in the process.

THE CIVILIZED MAN,  
SELF-CONTROLLED  
AND OBJECTIVELY ASTUTE  
LOSES ALL IN THE DENIAL  
OF THE 'OTHER'.

Insofar as one human group refuses to acknowledge another, to grant a share, leads the first group towards becoming merciless and egregious, resulting in cultural dislocation whereby the sense of identity is lost.

These are the eternal narratives embedded in such stories as *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* and other such archetypal Dionysian-Apollonian dichotomies which are also rooted in the human tribal pack and deep-rooted primordial instincts. The Greek tragedies inhabit this monstrous, inhuman, vengeful disease, as depicted in Agamemnon's house of Atreus, the parent killing the child and the child killing the parent. Condemned, cursed by contagious revenge and guilt, the ancient tragedians reflected on a culture ridden by its guilt when there was refusal to recognize not only the stranger of justice, but also the hand of redemption. Threats to social acceptance and belonging manifest behavioural responses, having myriad and at best, deplorable, construals. Rejection, discrimination, ostracism, betrayal and stigmatization encapsulate those in their refusal of acceptance and recognition in the alternative, the neighbour, the 'other'. These manifestations of the ancient Greek Furies, appointees of filial revenge, harbingers of hate and discourse, 'blood will have blood'<sup>2</sup>, seek out those who disregard truth, justice, conscience and the law of human nature.

The question of not recognizing the 'other' has had prodigious and traumatic effects on millions of shifting peoples from one land to another simply on the basis of agreed military solutions of distribution of land. Such forced migrations have driven people away from their homelands to unknown territories through a coerced and usually violent enforcement. In some cases, such forced displacements have resulted in 'population transfers', culminating in persecution and ethnic cleansing on a biblical scale. Most have never been able to return. Refugee displacement on such a grand order is

an indictment of abuse of power and apathetic minds in the ruling, political and military might, corrupt and deliberate action that has driven millions of the poor into destitute and marginalized communities. This induced landlessness has resulted in the loss of human rights and, more importantly, cultural fraction and isolation as well as significant social disarticulation, separation, alienation and disempowerment of the family and individual. The 20th century and the consequent break up of the multi-ethnic European empires after World War I manifested its many episodes of forced migration as witnessed by the German-Polish, Indian-Pakistani, Greek-Turkish and Cypriot<sup>3</sup> peoples, and the creation of independent post-colonial states. Hope, the final and ultimate barricade to all things evil, finally loses its footing and slides into oblivion and with total disregard and ultimate refusal to acknowledge the 'other', the stranger, we become hideously possessed by indifference, ultimately losing our own sanity and identity in the process. It is here that the human mind implodes into an anti-evolution where the 'brute' relives, not in the Savannah grasslands but the concrete of the city.

"It's late for us to be preserving our recollections. The essence of them, the first essence, has vanished already. But the core of every migrant's statement remains the same. Birth in one place, growing old in another place. And feeling a stranger in the two places."<sup>4</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. Vernant, J-P. (ed.) (2001) *The Universe, The Gods and Mortals*, Profile Books Ltd, London: United Kingdom
2. *From Shakespeare's Macbeth*.
3. *Twice a Stranger Project* ([www.twiceastranger.net](http://www.twiceastranger.net))
4. Ayşe Lahur Kirtunc, whose family moved from Crete to Turkey.

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DIMITRIOS TSOURIS

Dimitrios Tsouris, born Nicosia, Cyprus, 1946, is a full time visual artist (since 1980) with his studio just outside Exeter, UK. His main body of work is inspired from traditional Greek Orthodox iconography and the notion of 'presence', which he continues to employ within his own modern icons and abstract work.

Other inspiration comes from his work in Cyprus as an archaeological illustrator for the Department of Antiquities at the University of Cyprus, the Archaeological Department at the University of Oxford (just completed illustrations for Dr. Silvia Ferrara's new publication on Cypro-Minoan inscriptions) and for Professor Vassos Karageorghis and other archaeologists and universities.

[artmajeur.com/tsouris](http://artmajeur.com/tsouris)

## Identity, Ideas and Idiosyncrasy: Europe and Member State Collaboration

by — Constantine Christoforou

[Eng]

**“BUT BEYOND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL BARGAINS THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION TENDS TO REPRESENT DURING THE SOVEREIGN DEBT CRISIS, THE EU AND WE EUROPEANS EMBODY MANY NORMATIVE AND SHARED CULTURAL VALUES”.**

And with that resonating quotation, my European Philosophy class at the London School of Economics finished; the university bell struck brazenly signaling the end of my one-hour lecture. Despite my ardent urge for a decent cup of Earl Grey and a cigarette during the break, I could not help but feel that my lecturer's words had some greater salience.

European identity indeed became a quasi-obsession for me, so much so that I eventually wrote my dissertation on the topic. My research uncovered that for centuries the idea of Europe had been at the forefront of European polemic and self-understanding. Traditionally and historically, the nations of Europe have been bound by a plethora of characteristics that have set themselves apart from other civilizations in the world. This cultural ethos and collaboration has been engrained deeply in the European psyche, originally through the widespread influence of the Roman Empire and its presence in almost all parts of Europe. The Romans spread their legal customs and eventually legalized Christianity throughout the Empire in the 4th century AD, giving Europeans both a common legal system and a common religion.

Hence Roman law became the single most unifying feature of the continent at large. Edmund Burke described Europe as independent states, united as a common culture “digested into a system and disciplined by Roman law” (Pagden, 2002: 43). He went on to say due to this universal legal system, a European would feel at home residing in any of these independent states (*ibid.*, 43).

The European Court of Justice has striven

towards a continental legal system and has by and large succeeded; primacy of EU law was firmly established through cases such as *Van Gend en Loos*<sup>1</sup> and *Costa v ENEL*<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, T.S. Eliot believed that Europe had a common tradition of Christianity; “it is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have been rooted. An individual European may not believe that the Christian faith is true; and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will depend on Christian heritage for its meaning” (Luxmoore and Babiuch, 2005:87). The ancient peoples of Europe had therefore become united under a common respect for a legal system and now shared a common identity through a common religion.

Montesquieu, in his *De l'esprit des lois*, recognized another characteristic that made European culture distinctive. He believed that Europe, a relatively small geographic area did not foster the establishment of empires as its small scale favoured the spirit of independence (*génie de liberté*) (Pagden, 2002:118). Moreover, this was down to the fact that the Enlightenment and the advanced legal institutions (*république des lettres*) Europe possessed in the 18th century differentiated Europe from other non-European regions and this gave rise to the nation-state (*ibid.*, 118). It was the epoch of universalism and rights, which sewed the seeds for the revolutionary age of the 18th century (starting with the French Revolution).

Nevertheless,

do any of the aforementioned  
idiosyncrasies of European  
identity hold true in modern  
Europe of high unemployment,  
debt and chaotic economic  
governance?

In the 6th year of recession for the Eurozone, many countries have turned on each other: Northern vs. Southern, Protestant vs. Catholic/Orthodox, Atlantic vs. Mediterranean. Many Member States publicly and vehemently attacked other nations of the European Union by calling them “PIIGS” or the latter group calling the former “tyrants/dictators”, confirming that the idea of Europe may have become a superfluous concept for modern European nations. The fact is, at least on the face of things, there is so much more that binds Europe together in the present age than it did historically. We have a common market, legalizing the free movement of goods, people, capital and services, many Member States of course share a common currency and we even share a fledgling common foreign policy.

Despite all the economics and politics,

one thing has remained for Europe over the millennia: a common culture.

This culture, that has survived and evolved over time, permits Europeans to collaborate in spheres of education, the arts and communications that transcend bailout packages, “haircuts” and scary bank deposit levies. The focus on culture provides the perfect ambience for the creation of a European citizenry that will indeed foster a European ideology and Member State collaboration for many centuries to come.

The Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission has secured this dedication to the establishment of Europhiles through the Erasmus project, a noteworthy programme that grants university students from all over Europe the opportunity to study elsewhere on the continent. Cyprus' illustrious Commissioner and incidentally Head of DG EAC, Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou, has pledged to support this worthwhile project on a variety of occasions, especially through her self-explanatory *Erasmus for All* programme. This Member State cross-border institutional cooperation is a vital step in allowing Europeans to delve into a culture of another European country and even learn a new language. This is a predominant way to mobilize a European identity for the five hundred million citizens around the continent. It is with such a measure that racial discrimination from nation to nation will slowly be dispelled and the prospect of helping one another towards common goals (the hypothesis behind the European project) will be attained. Despite initial worries that one million fewer citizens would be able to enjoy the Erasmus experience through the European Council's decision to reduce the EU's multiannual financial framework, the European Parliament recently rejected this steep budget cut by 506 votes to 161; an evident example of Member States collaborating to ensure Europe's cultural trajectory.

Furthermore, the designation of European Capitals of Culture on an annual basis has been shown by the European Commission to promote an appurtenance to Europe. This innovative idea, at the request of the iconic Hellenic Minister for Culture, Melina Mercouri, has rallied Europeans behind the chosen cities; it is a celebration of the richness and diversity of European culture. Its annual rotation encourages every Member State and candidate states of the Union to reap the benefits of



becoming cultural epicentres for their chosen year. Cyprus’ “crack” will take place in 2017 where Aphrodite’s native Paphos will be flying the yellow, green and white flag for the Republic.

On an EU intergovernmental level, it is evident that Member States commit to Europe’s cultural identity through the negotiations of the EU budget, where millions of euros of the multiannual financial framework structural funds are pledged in abundance to EU-funded projects such as the new Acropolis Museum and the Cyprus Cultural Centre in Nicosia. Beyond the technocratic boardrooms of the Belgian capital however, NGOs and ordinary European citizens are putting into motion EU-wide collaborations, bringing Europeans closer together. One such brilliant strategy is *Hello Europe!*, a concept that entails erecting giant screens in European capitals that will bring citizens from different countries together. At any one point, two screens will be connected: for example, the two screens in London and Madrid will stream each other live. In theory, people in Madrid could be watching next year’s Royal baptism live or even watch an Adele concert taking place in London, whereas Londoners could take part in a flamenco dance-class or even Spanish-British speed dating. The possibilities are endless and it is a fresh and novel project that truly deserves people’s attention; it will foster Member State collaboration on a grassroot level, and this is ultimately the most important level to cultivate.

More Member State collaboration can be initiated by the *European Citizens’ Initiative* (ECI), giving one million Europeans from at least seven Member States the opportunity to propose legislation on a topic of their choosing. The first of these to be adopted is *Fraternité 2020*, which has the aim of ameliorating funding for EU exchange programmes like Erasmus. Other Member State collaborations in the form of ECIs that have been registered with the Commission are the Single Communication Tariff Act, aiming to curtail roaming fees and End Ecocide in Europe, promoting green issues.

What this article has explored is that

we must not, as Europeans, focus on our differences but embrace our similarities.

We must cultivate a true European culture, and not settle for a culture of euros, economic governance and monetary policy. There are more ways to collaborate than just via the internal market, such as through arenas that embrace a culture of collaboration via Europe’s heritage. Neofunctionalist

theory will argue that “spillover” will allow cultural collaboration to then become collaboration in political, economic and fiscal fields. The European identity will therefore mend many wounds that have been created with the Eurozone crisis and will eventually assist in fixing economic and political integration. Europeans are stronger together; in an increasingly multi-polar world (USA and the BRICS), Europe’s remit and influence is diminishing by the decade. It is important that we remain united and collaborate so that we keep an important status worldwide.

I began this article stating the ideals that Europeans hold most dearly and these characteristics established a universalist and normative European Union that respected the rule of law and Europeans’ rights; a mirror-image of sorts of nation states at the time. However, the crisis in Europe has provoked the foundation of a completely new and optimistic criterion – solidarity. Solidarity allowed the French to march on the boulevards of Paris holding placards stating “we are all Greeks”. It was solidarity that led Spaniards to protest at Cyprus’ unfair bailout terms this March and to brand themselves as *indignados* at the EU regime.

## IT IS THIS NEW IDENTITY OF SOLIDARITY THAT WILL ADVOCATE FOR EUROPEAN COLLABORATION BETWEEN VARIOUS NATIONS OF THE CONTINENT,

which will keep the European spirit and ideals alive in times of both recession and an economic boom. It is this solidarity that will ensure the continuation of the European identity, permitting Europe to be an admirable economic, political and cultural force that will be internationally respected. Despite the tripartite motto of *austerité, précarité, compétitivité* being more fitting for the current climate, the era of European *liberté, égalité et fraternité* will soon return.

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### CASE LAW

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### FOOTNOTES

- Case 26/62, *NV Algemene Transporten Expeditie Onderneming van Gend en Loos v Nederlandse Administratis der Belastingen* [1963] ECR I
- Case 26/62, *NV Algemene Transporten Expeditie Onderneming van Gend en Loos v Nederlandse Administratis der Belastingen* [1963] ECR I

### CONSTANTINE CHRISTOFOROU

Constantine Christoforou is currently training at the European Commission. Born and raised in North-West London, he studied Law at the University of Warwick and then went on to read EU Politics and International Relations at the London School of Economics. His interests include travel, Renaissance art, house/electro music, European history, politics and modern European languages.

## Forced Collaboration

by — O. Emiddio Vasquez Hadjilyra

[Eng]

‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such period of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.’<sup>1</sup>

## INVASION/INVITATION

Listening to the words of all connoisseurs and of our newly-elected president that belatedly proclaimed that Cyprus, as a whole, is all at once experiencing the greatest threat since the Turkish invasion of 1974, one cannot help but to ask: How are these seemingly disparate events even comparable? Setting aside the false association of the economic commensurability of these two events and downplaying, momentarily, the divisive, inherent falsification in any historical account concerning the invasion: whereas the Turkish invasion involved the forceful trespassing into the physical space of Cyprus, the over-night loss of human life and the indefinite physical occupation of the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus which at that time was responsible for more than 70% of the potential of the island’s physical economy, the current threat involves a “voluntary” plead towards a private institution to save the virtual space of Cypriot economy – namely, that of the banking sector – the loss of human life will not be instant but over time and through devaluation, and the true outcomes of our deliberate invitation, having been masterly redesigned to by-pass the House of Representatives, are yet to be determined, but will most

certainly include austerity measures and privatizations in exchange for pennies.

If one were to legitimate the above association between the Turkish invasion and the ECB’s refusal to keep providing liquidity to our already collapsed banking system, it could only be done by reflecting on their timing. It appears as if the only meaningful link between these two events is their seeming spontaneity that caught Cyprus off-guard, which only reinforces the general outlook on life that Cypriots afforded to have so far.

Things will necessarily change now, for better or worse, and will depend on the questions we ask and our demands.

In the case of the Turkish invasion, in order to determine whether there were evident signs pointing at the possibility of an invasion and learn from our history so that it is no longer abused by politicians, a better understanding of the geo-strategic aspirations of all related nations is necessary and especially Greece’s official foreign policy at that time, which has been kept secret for too long. In the case of the ongoing crisis, familiarization with the workings of fictitious capital<sup>2</sup> is necessary to begin understanding how it is possible that the whims of traders/traitors and their outright fraudulent speculation can have an impact so great as to be set aside to an invasion of a sovereign nation’s grounds, while displacing more recent tragedies like the one at the Evangelos Florakis Naval Base.

The implication of Greece in both events resonates with what Marx says about the doubling of important historical happenings: they appear ‘*first time as a tragedy, the second as a farce*’.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Cyprus’ modern history, given the Greek coup d’état that ignited the Turkish invasion, the ambitious expansion of Cypriot banks and their over-exposure to the Greek economy that led to the current crisis – i.e. investing on toxic financial instruments originally devised by Goldman Sach’s in early 2000 to “correct” Greece’s balance sheet – must be the reoccurrence of that tragedy that led to this invasion, only this time as a farce. However, one should not rush into reckless conflations and conjure meaning out of ambiguity and ignorance; that activity is well practiced by our media that join the dots only once the picture is complete and by most of our politicians whose short-sighted political vision mirrors the historical memory of the people. Can “we” overcome what is to come or is this the end-point?

## “WE”

But, is an all-embracing “we” genuinely possible in current society, or should it be taken as just another unrefined generalization from colloquial language? While Cyprus’ inevitable collapse is far from isolated and local, not only has it been treated as such, but the very core issues that were detected in banks demanded for our contribution in the form of financial support through political intervention. Is this not the dissolution of politics and, generally, that of nation-states? How did economic theory reach this level of ambiguity, that while there exists a financial market of fictitious capital with a notional amount of hundreds of trillions of dollars we remain gullible enough to believe terms such as “sovereign debt”, “national GDP” and so on, that correspond to miniscule fractions of the “wealth” going around.

The case of Cyprus reinforces a paradox that is becoming all too familiar: under the current neoliberal paradigm of a free market that functions optimally when regulation is at its minimum, in which each individual rational participant aims to maximize profit at his own risk,

we witness that, time and again, once toxic debt becomes unbearable to one bank’s balance sheets its salvation becomes a general duty and everyone’s responsibility (i.e. Too-Big-to-Fail); this is forced collaboration.

During the times of profiting, however, the bank competed as an individual entity and benefitted accordingly. Still, if a bank is nothing but a social convention which individuals trust and make a loan to at a lower interest rate (in the form of deposits) than what the bank will charge its customer in return (in the form of loans), then how can the terms be inverted so grotesquely, that not only depositors will have to pay for the mistakes of a singular bank’s management, but a whole nation’s economy will essentially collapse? Then again, it will be equivocally argued that, in fact, few individual employees were committing fraudulent trading and not the bank as a whole, and thus we should not equate their actions to their institutions’ nor punish the whole institution for the errors done by a few individuals.

The constant shuffling of categories between the individual and the group, the singular and the multiple – “the One and the Many” – is one that haunts metaphysics from its very foundation and permeates political ontology.

Plato asks: how can one being that is made up of *many* parts, partake in both the One and the Many? How can an individual citizen be also part of a society? In the context of our discussion, it seems that the heterogeneous banking sector has finally resolved the riddle: by differentiating themselves from the rest when profiteering in their financial speculation and by reintegrating themselves to the original economy when it is time to default on toxic debts that disable them from meeting their commercial duties.

In other words, banks were singular, individual and autonomous when they received returns from trading bonds of Greek debt, but once that debt was trimmed and those bonds accounted for nothing, then the same banks – that embodied all along the trust and labour of Cypriot people – became part of the Cypriot economy.

If we can turn the above solution on its head it seems that we may have come across a nice general formula for social collaboration in these allotted times of crises that torment the globe: by claiming our individual independence from the financial sectors and refusing to collaborate while, *simultaneously*, reintegrating ourselves, with other fellow independent citizens, into the originating economy that is responsible for true wealth.

In the case of Cyprus, given that our economy is made up of the contributions of multiplicities to whom correspond precise responsibilities, we ought to realize that,

## UNDER THE FALSE PREMISE OF A NATIONAL THREAT, ALL THAT VARIABILITY BECAME HOMOGENOUS AND LEAD TO A BAIL-OUT WHICH THE CYPRIOT PEOPLE HAD NEVER ASKED FOR.

Similarly, by falsely homologizing our economy to that of the banking sectors – given the latter’s dualist nature – we also mutilated the image of our economy which led us to perceive it as being threatened as a whole, homogeneously. While it may be too late to undo the false perception of economic relations in our island, there may be time still to expose the dualist nature of banking; and by refusing to collaborate, we could even get the banks, which are intrinsically

indifferent and independent to our lives, to pay their fair share(s).

### FOOTNOTES

1. Marx, K., “The Eigtheenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.” In *Selected Writings*, edited by Simon, L.H. Hackett Publishing Co, Inc, 1994, pp.i88–i89
2. Without alienating anyone with the codified language of finance (hedging, derivatives, credit default swaps, shorting etc.) fictitious capital is a term that Marx uses in *Capital. Vol III* and simply refers to an array of financial promises and whims that are treated as having intrinsic value and therefore deemed as tradable. This is, of course, a rather anachronistic understanding of finance, but perhaps the current crisis calls for this type of simplification to challenge the financial status quo on its very foundations.
3. *Op. cit.*, n.i, p.i88

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<http://multiplicit.tumblr.com>

## Sensory Stories: A building in question

by — Petros Siammas

[Eng]

On October 15, 2011, a group of people<sup>1</sup> in the divided island of Cyprus gathered and set up tents between the checkpoints of the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus and the, recognised only by Turkey, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. As a sprout of the Occupy movements, it was named ‘Occupy the Buffer Zone’ (OBZ). Positioned between, they had set themselves up on the narrowest point of the Buffer Zone, a cease-fire space established to separate the Greek and Turkish speaking Cypriot communities since the invasion of Turkey in 1974. This particular point takes its spot in the old town centre in the capital, Nicosia, a crossroad of two streets: Ledra/Lokmacı Street running south to north, and Kykkos Street running east to west, under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. After 38 years of inaccessibility, the locks of the two outer spaces of the southeast building were broken on January 1, 2012. Within two months, activities from poetry nights, tango classes, an anthropo-activist workshop, an art exhibition, the Activity Centre and the coffee shop filled these spaces. Eventually, the movement was divided and the people left behind went deeper into the building, restoring a space once in ruins to an inhabitable one. Over time the building transformed and on April 6, 2012, state violence raided the building, leading to its inhabitants’ expulsion. In interviews conducted members expressed growth, cherishment and intimacy with the building.

This paper will narrate vignettes, as glimpses of activity that formed via the potentiality of the southeastern building as specific environmental forms of material engagement in the building, from entering a space in ruins, to regenerating the ‘dead’ space as forming inhabitation and state violence in a police raid as a form of impact. My space though is limited and I focus on these glimpses within 5-6 months of my first attempt in fieldwork to specifically experiment with descriptive instruments to invoke materiality through an environment of inhabitation and impact. What descriptive instruments can I deploy as a methodology in narrating vignettes that do not encapsulate, but breathe form into the reader? Can I evoke sensation via Grosz in extracting

affect from affection and percept from perception, through writing? That might also depend on the reader. But first, let us begin our journey with two questions: What is it then to enter and live in an abandoned space, what is it to leave it behind for someone else to come?

## IN THE MAKING: INHABITATION

It took me three weeks to enter the building. I heard that the young ones were excited to create their own space. I heard that projects of painting and decorating were circulating, but no one would tell me exactly what they were doing, ‘Come and see for yourself,’ they would say. I wasn’t sure about the building, I didn’t know what it was, what it meant to enter further, how it contributed to anything other than to be inhabited and for who. For what purpose? Some were excited and some had taken off, disappointed. Will they want the building to serve, or will they take care of it? In any case, wouldn’t anyone be curious to just have a peak?

The outside was quiet. Surfaces with banners transmitted words to the passer-by, a space that used to be filled with people who had camped for 3 months beforehand interrupting the passers-by walk. Now, it was just a space for banners. But let’s continue our journey. Coming through the Activity Centre, now filled with a few couches, unfinished paint, abandoned, we used to have tango classes here, group reflection workshops, art exhibitions, and poetry nights. Passing through, to the back, I lift the cloth and I look up in a trapezium space. As I hear the pumping of rock music I turn to the right, reaching the stairs and I look up again. On the side of the stairs, a sealed hole, leading to the back of the police station. Footsteps thumping, legs on each stair, to the first floor, to the second floor, running as the hands sled up and down the rails. Climbing to the first floor, I notice Ökten on the side of a desk, varnishing delicately, brushstrokes up, brushstrokes down, shining light shimmering across its surface. ‘Look,’ he says in pride, ‘it’s my new desk!’ ‘A beautiful sight’, I thought, ‘the sandbags behind you on a window sill, moss growing underneath.’ Over the next few weeks, the decayed and grayed corridors changed to purple, spreading virally as the movement of bodies quickened, bringing more tools, brushes, axes, spades, from a world beyond the building. Soldiers’ rankings were found marked on the walls, half broken magazine cut-outs of naked women seductively glaring to the new inhabitants. Further in, the building disclosed bricked walls, broken to reveal

a pharmacy in ruins. Bodies gathered as the spray of graffiti flooded close to the walls, warning of possible toxic fumes from the pharmacy.

Movement traversed from basement to roof, reminding me of Bachelard in that ‘the house is imagined as a concentrated being’, linked with vertical polarity from attic to cellar<sup>2</sup>. Doors were brought, approaching each room to alter the process of entry and exit, passing rooms becoming private space, floors and ceilings patched as the walls became sturdier. One is reminded of Tim Ingold, in that a ‘real house is a gathering of lives, and to inhabit it is to join in the gathering.’<sup>3</sup> Things one might say, gathered and added to the mobilizing complexity of fluid space, and thingness as lively was to be sustained via movement and contact. In the evening, a generator hummed vibrantly as it powered networks of wires distributing electricity across all rooms. During the day, the Mediterranean sun warmed the space, and the hive collected to the trapezium centre digging, grinding and chopping through the 40 year old soil, as dust floated into the air and powdered arms pulled away sheets of metal. The air moistened the deeper we dug, our lungs filled with the flavor of dust, finding the roots of a leafless tree. Frail faces surfaced with newspapers speaking of Soviets from the 60s, coming back to vision. Notebooks, denture forms, and envelopes from an office for the blind frictionally arrived between our fingers when the air cooled under the dimming sky.

## POLICE RAID: IMPACT

Kick. Kick again. The locked double doors rebounded. The translucency of glass reverberated, panes shattering, pieces dispersing as the ground trickled in mosaic sharp violence. The helmeted muscled man kicked again, brutal black leather boot ripping the locked doors apart, breached. Wooden frames resisting, he widened his elbows and his hands tightly gripped on the edge of each ajar door, dragging their screeching weight scraping against the floor, opening them apart. Entering, he disappeared. The rest were subsumed into the police station. They entered through the hole. Fuck, what do I do?

Fragments of a thought jounded, ‘Vision, vision, power, vision, anthropology teaches us, vision, power, vision, vision.’

I ran to my café in the south, feet in urgency in the paradox of coffee sippers, whispering to anyone familiar, go to the building. NOW.



A few metres away, I ran to the square.

Grabbing onto the only person there I knew, I said ‘When I shout mic-check, you shout mic-check.’

‘MIC CHECK!’ The coffee drinkers turned. Standing on a bench, I shouted in Greek:

‘Hello. My name is Petro. I am an activist. For the past 5 months we have been living in the Dead Zone and we want the unification of the island. People have been giving life to the Dead Zone, and now the police have entered with violence into the building, and they will beat people up! They’re all holding guns! You have to come! COME AND SEE, COME AND SEE!’ Some concerned looks, some cynical remarks. Running back, my companion blurted, ‘And what did you expect from that?’ ‘That’s not the point Umur,’ I replied, ‘it doesn’t matter, the point is to just do it, not expect.’

Slams. Back outside the building, a few people gathered, watching. On the outside, the building’s concrete surface hooked onto our gazes. Bangs, shatters, the breakage of doors, scattered the acoustic violation of an unreachable space. The outside tightened as the flow of bodies gathered, coalescing. Glass splintered, gasps released and the sense of urgency frantically leeches across the outsiders. Howls from within weaved a language of the disturbed and invoked condemnation, the wailing of the dogs quivered the air and the shrieks of a girl from a locked balcony above us pierced the trembling flesh: ‘Let me leave in peace, let me be.’ My fingers lost weight in rolling a cigarette. Deep barks penetrated through walls, and screams, thumps, and the violation of multiple entries through the building ripped the air in shudder. ‘All this time the panes didn’t break – until now! Now you broke them.’ ‘Where’s your warrant!’ ‘Playing it masculine, you’re all liars!’ The nauseating red of the appearing ambulance whined through and the outsiders clapped in maddening irony for the filled stretcher only to be taken away. Back at the double doors, figures in the deep darkness glimpsed as the outsiders attempted to shine light with their meager torches, voices of interrogation trailing around from the unseen corner. The crowd pushed to go in, and the crowd dispersed back, black clothed muscle fuming authority as arms, fists, legs and voices bent their forces through and upon one another.

20+ arrested, from which, as the police spokesperson spoke in the media: ‘What were underage boys and girls

doing with 45 year old men in there?’ The building was locked.

## POST-RAID REFLECTIONS

“Petro”, as Mina’s eyes glistened searching for hope, “re, what are we gonna do about ‘Buffer’? Are we gonna have an assembly? What are we gonna do? ‘Buffer’s’ dying, it’s convulsing, Buffer’s going to die.” I looked down, wanting to give an answer, to give her a way to step forward, something that could work for everyone, and looked into her eyes in lament: “I don’t know. I really don’t know. No one knows what they want to do. We’ll see(?). Maybe? I don’t know re.” Over the next couple of months, the movement scattered, not knowing where to go, what would happen, how to gain direction. We had organized an event to reopen the building, finding scenes of left violence, from broken doors, scattered objects, to overturned furniture and newly installed sandbags. A few days after, again, the building was ‘mysteriously’ locked and barred – this time, from the inside. Inaccessibility now felt permanent.

In early September, I interviewed four of the youngsters from the movement, to gain some of their insightful reflections. In asking what the building was for them, Minerva said:

“The building was stopped in time, like many things. And it’s like the mentality of Cypriots, 35 years ago, halted in things, the clothes that you didn’t have enough time to save, the things that were locked up, the things that were taken back. And then you go in, and you expel them, you sweep them away and you bring in new energy into the space. I mean, there were people who had died in that building. I mean, for example, my room, and the one of Andreas and others, they all had holes from bullets. And imagine, there were sandbags there. Socrates wrote a nice paragraph about this. He said that, it isn’t about covering the, the hole from the bullet with, with plaster, the point is to paint around it, to umm... to [Katerina: “to give life again”]... yeah from within that thing that had died, that was destroyed, to bring out something new. Not to hide it, not to make it as if it never existed.”

What is it to bring new energy to a space? Or to bring out something new from what seems inanimate, that lacks? Energy invokes movement, and that ‘people had died in the building’ doesn’t suppose that the building or its innards’ life is over, but that the state of the ‘dead’ is the material potentiality lingering only to be sprouted not by but with the human. To argue for a potentiality tapped by the human otherwise romanticizes; it centralizes the

human as the sole actor and privileges the human while undermining the nonhuman capacities. The human takes on an authoritative role in the world we live in, selfishly without considering that perhaps there are other entities at work from the smallest stone to the largest galaxy. To address the ‘dead’ is just that, to name it as ‘dead’, but for whom? For the nonhuman’s material potentiality to be tapped with the human, though, generates questions of ethical practice, responsibilities and accountabilities in sustaining the building’s relationship to the human. Painting around and not over bullet holes acknowledges material damage as a product of the human nonhuman relationship in the past, yet recognizing that in the present, attempts to build laborious effort as a force of cohesion between the two entities. It means to work, to care, and that turning a blind eye to the bullet hole is to deny the unspoken contractual form of inhabiting a building, and in turn deny the building itself.

To reiterate, Socrates, a philosophical young man, explains:

“[The building] gained an aesthetic as a mark from the war, it became an aesthetic of meaning and beauty. I can’t explain it very well now because I am not living through it so vividly. By entering that building, and to refurbish the building, it’s as if you’re healing at the same time your own wounds, I mean the time that you’re doing that physically you’re also making it emotional towards yourself, you’re also healing your own wounds. You’re fixing the mistakes of war. I matured from this, I matured so much.”

Elaine Scarry gives as the example of the maker of the chair, where in making the chair pain is let into and materialized in the form of the chair. In this sense, in the act of making pain is released, and the reciprocal relationship between the maker and the chair is indeed therapeutic. Socrates sees the building as a mark of war, but to re-approach the building is to come into contact again, to establish a new connection without erasing the building. One is to recognize the building as it came to be, a mark of war, and appreciate its character unconditionally as the building approaches any arriver with immense potentiality.

In doing so, to fix the mistakes of war, one recognizes the accountability in the human-nonhuman relationship in violently transforming the world and allows one to take a step back and say ‘Well, how can we work together?’

During war, one might say that the intention of unmaking exacerbates pain.





It burns more. It sharpens. To remake, rather than to unmake, embraces the fragility of life and accounts for the constancy of releasing pain from the human, and allows that subjective space previously occupied by pain to be replaced with new capacities, new potentials. Cherishment is what developed during the time of OBZ, Scarry can add to this in that:

“...the most cherished object is one that has been handmade by a friend: there is no mystery about this, for the object’s material attributes themselves record and memorialize the intensely personal, extraordinary because exclusive, interior feelings of the maker are for just this person – This is for you.”<sup>4</sup>

On a collective level, one can imagine that the building recorded the personal and interior feelings of the collective, where a plurality of human presence layered over and with the layers left from the time of war or as a militarized post. Painting, digging, and installing new objects were forms of layering presence and inadvertently led to collective cherishment. For example now, putting up pictures of the model I made of the building on Facebook, several people from OBZ sent messages of how they miss the place, or how it put a smile on their face.

What is the building anymore, for who? Katerina explains: “Because it showed that life used to be here, you know, and that you were trying to bring back life to this place. And in that, we also left a life in there you know. If someone goes in there again, they’ll see that there was life there. That life existed there.”

“But is he who opens a door and he who closes it the same being?”<sup>5</sup> Bachelard asks. What is it to re-enter that space again? How does one speak of an expected arrival entering the building to discover what life was there before? Unless I meet the person who goes into the building, one never knows, and vice versa, the person will never know the OBZ’s story. Katerina sees that person as a projection in the future, in acknowledging the OBZ’s material engagement as a layer of another human presence via the objects left behind. But if we speak for the unknown person, they will have their own stories to tell, the new objects in the building will have something else to say. And the building as a whole, is a story of its own, where people of OBZ were as significant as any other unknown person.

Threads of material life linger in the space, whether the human is there or not. When first entering the building, the OBZ encountered decay, moss, and the frailness of paper. Material transformation was already at play, material liveliness already temporalized.

The building can be considered as a monument becoming alive, one that creates fables via the situated objects left behind, narrating stories of a life before, narrating stories as I have now.

As Deleuze says, ‘the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. The monument’s action is not memory but fabulation.’<sup>6</sup> To think of the building as a left behind multilayered material memory existing only for the ones who collectively generated that memory, if we speak for the OBZ, for the unknown person though the building would be a series of other sensations, other discoveries, other stories formulating in that moment between him and the building itself. The cherishment exists for the OBZ’s relationships (and perhaps the pre-war inhabitants) that came from labor with the building’s materiality; for the unknown person, the building is a new story filled with other possibilities that incalculably alter with every arrival, for the building itself has a story of its own. On its own the building changes, the walls will decay, the ceilings will drip, the objects left behind will go yellow and termites will eat through the furniture. The sandbags will weigh down as they fill with rain, the beds will stink, more moss will grow, and the bullet holes, well the bullet holes, will always be there. In a sense, I realize now, as I craft my final words here and make the last walls of a carton model of the building, that in acknowledging the building with a story of its own, of which the OBZ was only a part of, I release my own nostalgia.<sup>7</sup>

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APPENDIX

Excerpt from Socrates’ note after the raid (translated):

“Can it be considered logical to arrest, to beat and kick out people who took a dead building, in ruins and transformed it into a social centre? A space that accommodates a multidimensional area of projections, a self-organized coffee shop/reading room, collective kitchen, gym, music and radio station. A space that, when we entered, even the floors had holes and yet we

didn’t undermine its historical value, the view of the sunset from the roof yet also its unusual architecture. And yet flooded with urge and passion, with a creativity that doesn’t recognize preconception, within a month we made the space livable and capable of hosting many forms of activities. And in the protest we realized that this movement was a need of EVERY Cypriot, as you expel the traumas of the [Turkish] invasion materially and spiritually created upon the ruins. To throw away sandbags, to fix the doors and even the windows and to seal 40 year old holes from the bullets of the automatic guns, to paint around and not above the erosion of the walls because we do not forget the spiritual deadening of the invasion. We dare to give life again to what was stolen from us, we do not remain worshippers of victimhood, crying over the remains. We reclaim every piece of land, every building and every human relationship.”

FOOTNOTES

1. Note: Names in this article have been anonymised.
2. Bachelard, p. 17.
3. Ingold, p. 5.
4. Scarry, p. 292.
5. Bachelard, p.224.
6. Deleuze & Guattari, p.167-8.
7. Nostalgia comes from Greek, meaning ‘nostos’ to return home, and ‘algos’ for pain.

PETROS SIAMMAS

Petros Siammas completed his BSc in Psychology and Philosophy in 2008, focusing on the phenomenology of entheogenics on first time users. Returning to the island, he became fascinated with the sensual and spatial idiosyncrasies of the Dead Zone. He is currently a Fulbright student in the MA Anthropology program at the New School for Social Research and has been conducting pilot fieldwork at the Occupy Buffer Zone in Old Nicosia. Desperately juggling between anthropological mode and political engagement, he is curious to offer argumentative thought for activism as a method for political and intellectual engagement. Troubled by questions of sincerity, vocality and health, he is curious to explore these dimensions as ones of subjectivity in conjunction with materiality and space. As usual, he is yet to find answers.





## Learning from the commons

by — Thalia Charalambous

[Eng]

This piece is concerned with thinking about alternate ways to deal with an ‘era of crisis’ and sustain communities through collective procedures. My route to this work has been through my architectural education and, at the same time, my dedicated interest in participatory and collaborative approaches of social practice. I was firstly introduced to the term ‘commons’ during my final year of architectural studies in 2011, upon my participation in Live Project 04 at the Sheffield School of Architecture. The project’s purpose was to conduct a research around the subject of commons and at the same time to take a close look at a local example of a commons’ operation. However, the need for such systems isn’t limited to just a local level. There seems to be a global longing for a turn, from the individual to the collective.

At times – like the one Cyprus is experiencing at present – of recession and scarcity, disasters like the one in Mari and increased crime incidents, the social structure, the environment and the economy are going through a massive crisis. On top of that, there’s our national attitude of ‘individual-ness’ that has prevented us, in many cases, to think and act for our mutual benefit. Yet, our society’s traditional power structures fail to provide cohesive solutions to survive the hardships of today’s reality. Instead, political parties each stand within their boundaries, with no intention of collaborating; the private sector grows provocatively and more money is poured into the market economy, while communities struggle to sustain themselves. It is only anticipated that in evaluation of the existing conditions and reaction to conventional systems, people would revive a contemporary Kett’s Rebellion<sup>1</sup> or seek the Diggers<sup>2</sup> approaches. Julian Dobson has quoted that

‘ordinary people are discovering that they aren’t helpless in the face of global turmoil. They don’t have to leave the answers to the experts. With small and apparently insignificant actions, they can change the world around them and discover their own worth in the process.’

The clock is saying that the time has come for us to participate too in the social and urban revitalization that has begun to take place around us. So, how can we learn from the notion of the commons and establish ways that would start to have an effect upon our complex, multi-diverse environment?

First I’ll say a few things about the commons. The commons are the outcome of people’s desire to take control over their locality and own environment. Defying hierarchical patterns, commons operate within distributed local networks of ‘peer-to-peer’ participants and hence could be described as grassroots projects.

We meet examples of commons in our everyday life without even noticing, with the most obvious being the air we breathe.

By the same logic, the commons are resources of various natures both material, such as land and food, and immaterial, such as knowledge and skills. The internet, a digital resource of information and networking, is also a commons we access and sustain almost unconsciously every day. Water, music, language, law, libraries, national parks, genetics, blood banks, history, the night-sky, etc.

There are some inseparable aspects to true commons in order to identify them as such. These cultural and natural resources are not held in private; instead they are collectively owned and managed, which suggests shared benefit but also shared responsibility. Secondly, they cannot be commodified, since they are considered ‘gifts’ for everyone without exceptions. If they are, they cease to be considered as commons. Lastly, the commons ought to be retained by the community that manages them; therefore they have to be sustainable to last through generations.

‘Just as we receive them as shared gifts, so we have a duty to pass them on to future generations in at least the same condition as we received them. If we can add to their value, so much the better, but at a minimum we must not degrade them, and we certainly have no right to destroy them.’<sup>3</sup>

The reasons for a commons to be established are plethoric, from economic to environmental to social. Examples are found across the world, starting from the ancient times. The notion of commons or ‘res communes’ (Latin for common things) originated from ancient Rome, where they were one of the three categories that resources were divided into. The private resources (res privatæ) acquired by individuals, the public resources (res publicæ) such as roads and public structures and finally the common resources such as air, water and animals.

An example of food commons could be Todmorden, a small town in the north of England. A local organisation

called ‘Incredible Edible’ have gathered politicians, planners, farmers and volunteers, and with everyone’s contribution through campaigns and workshops, they’ve managed to turn the town into a commons, where inhabitants grow and harvest food, provide education on farming matters and guidance on how to sustain this system. The ‘food hub’ in Drumshanbo, Leitrim in Ireland, is a smaller scale example. It is a food production facility re-using an empty office space to house entrepreneurs and existing businesses that require a cost effective production. Management of these units is based on a triptych of levels; landlord, innovator and trainee and provides total employment for 35 people. R-urban in Colombes, NW Paris, is a scheme that observes and suggests new models of ecological living and urban retrofitting based on localisation, through a series of urban activities, collective uses of land and testing methods of self-management.

Now to return to the question I raised above about learning from the commons’ concept and making steps towards applying it in our context. The answer is not simple and it certainly doesn’t mean that the commons will solve all our problems. It is rather a wake-up call so we can actually realise that there are other ways of thinking, other ways of living and dealing with inevitable change. The principles that commons are based on are what should be a reference point in shifting our perception and familiarising with this ‘otherness’.

In doing so, we need to find common ground; shared heritage, interests, desires and cause. This is not easy since the dichotomy of the land in Cyprus has never stopped at the physical but has affected people on a social and personal level. A social chasm between the left and right wing, between football clubs’ fans turning sports into battlefields, between people of different ethnicities.

And the personal chasm of oneself, who hardly ever acts on intuition, contradicting human nature with a M.A.D.<sup>4</sup> status quo. If we managed to overcome these tendencies it would be easier to lead to another undividable aspect of the commons’ philosophy: establishing communities.

By community I don’t just mean people living in the same area, but a group of them practicing common ownership. Recently in Cyprus, artist movements have started to expand and have impact on public matters. The unemployed, growing in number, could take action in establishing a network of

people with a shared purpose in dealing with the crisis. Local farmers could do the same, in order to promote local produce to the market. All that is needed is trust-based relationships, which could vary from volunteers, organizations, experts, dynamic individuals who take initiative and young people with the drive to be a part and help sustain the community.

Then, there is another problematic area that needs to be tackled. That is, the traditional patterns of governance. We are used to hierarchical systems of classification in governing systems – as a result of manipulation of the democratic regime – where there is a leading figure on the top and other branches of authority break down under it. The majority of people are placed at the bottom of the pyramid, with no actual ‘say’ to decisions.

Reconfiguring patterns, turning them into decentralised governance schemes, brings decision making processes closer to the people to whom those decisions concern. The right to decision making empowers the individual and hence creates a stronger group of dynamic participants.

Another form of this empowerment is education which must not be underestimated or excluded from any collaborative initiative. ‘Between individuals within a community knowledge is shared through other networks and passed from one generation to the next. This is education in its broadest sense.’<sup>5</sup> From just awareness about certain matters, to empirical learning, it is vital that knowledge and skills should be shared and open to everyone in order to promote collaborative models and teamwork. The role of educating younger members of communities is also crucial since through the younger generations those communities could be sustained. Schools and colleges in Cyprus are the largest resource of education, though they take a linear approach to education, whereas interactive schemes escaping the typical teacher-student relationship would be more appropriate both in disseminating information as well as in setting examples of participative behaviour.

These are some of many we can learn from the commons’ movement and begin to evaluate the world we’re living in. However, none of the above is really relevant if the fundamental factor is missing from this equation. And this ingredient cannot be measured or forced nor can it be taught. The students of Live Project 04 called it the ‘invisible force’. Or it could be called trust, drive,

loyalty, commitment, motivation, enthusiasm, passion, etc. Hopefully, each individual’s ‘invisible force’ will overcome the reluctance to change. The bottom-up and from-within approach of the commons is a good way to start questioning not only how we got here but how we can see the current situation as an opportunity rather than a tragedy. After all, if it hadn’t been for this crisis, we would probably still be living in the ‘perpetual-acceptance-of-norms-era’ and this chance to write about subjects like the commons wouldn’t have been offered at all.

### FOOTNOTES

1. A revolt in Norfolk, England, during the reign of Edward VI, largely in response to the enclosure of land that began on 8 July 1549.
2. A nonconformist dissenting group that tried to reform the existing social order with an agrarian lifestyle based on their ideas for the creation of small egalitarian rural communities.
3. Barnes, Peter (2006), Capitalism 3.0: A Guide to Reclaiming the Commons, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Fransisco, CA, USA, p.6
4. M.A.D. is an acronym for Manufactured And Designed.
5. Live Project 04: ‘Growing in Todmorden’ (2011), You Can Say Yes Compendium, Published at the University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK, p.30

### THALIA CHARALAMBOUS

Thalia Charalambous is an architecture graduate from the SSoA (Sheffield School of Architecture) concerned with the practice of architecture with socio-political responsiveness. She is interested in the critique of contemporary models of architectural practice and the role of today’s architect. Thalia is currently shifting from being an intern at an architectural practice and conducting research around architecture’s input through participation and engagement of users in processes within the urban and social environment.

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## “...όλα τα έθνη να κατοικούν στην ίδια γειτονιά.”

από — Ντενίσα Καραντζά

<span></span>
<div><span>[</span>Grk<span>]</span></div>
<span></span>

Τις περισσότερες φορές η ενήλικη «σοφία» μας, που αποσκοπεί στη διαφύλαξη και μετάδοση αξιών, μας κάνει να σκιαγραφούμε τους νέους στη βάση περιορισμένων ενδιαφερόντων και της μειωμένης τους ανάγκης για ανάπτυξη και μάλιστα με ένα ζωηρό και ώριμο ενδιαφέρον τους «υποστηρίζουμε» στην κρίσιμη περίοδο της εφηβείας τους καθώς σε αυτή την περίοδο η δική τους επανάσταση αποτελεί απειλή για την ηθική μας και τα κεκτημένα μας.

Η αφορμή για τη συγγραφή αυτού του άρθρου υπήρξε ο δεκαπεντάχρονος Ο, ο οποίος πέραν του ότι με τα λόγια του με εξέπληξε ευχάριστα, μπορώ να πω ότι κυρίως με προβλημάτισε κάτω από το πρίσμα όλων των «ενήλικων» ρόλων μου.

Σε μια σχετική εργασία, αν ο Ο ήταν θεός για μια ημέρα, θα έκανε τον καθένα να ζει σε ένα ειρηνικό περιβάλλον και όλα τα έθνη να κατοικούν στην ίδια γειτονιά (“*make everyone live in peace and all nations dwell in the same neighborhood*”).

Η ώριμη αυτή επιθυμία του νεαρού, εμπνευσμένη από το ανθρωπιστικό όραμα του Martin Luther King, δίνει ένα χαρακτηριστικό στίγμα των αναγκών της γενιάς του και ταυτόχρονα προβληματίζει για τις προσεγγίσεις των προηγούμενων γενεών. Το ερώτημα που απορρέει σχετίζεται με το

#### τι καθιστά τον κόσμο μας τόσο φιλόξενο για τον νεαρό και τον ωθεί να ονειρεύεται για κάτι που έπρεπε να θεωρείται αυτονόητο.

Το ερώτημα του τι διχάζει τα έθνη, τις φυλές, τους ανθρώπους σε τελική ανάλυση, κάνοντας το χάσμα να μοιάζει αγεφύρωτο, εξηγείται λίγο ή πολύ στη βάση οικονομικών, πολιτικών και ιστορικοεθνικών συγκρούσεων. Τι είναι, ωστόσο, αυτό που δυσχεραίνει τη δημιουργία ενός κόσμου φιλικού για όλους; Ένα σχολικό πλαίσιο και μάλιστα πολυπολιτισμικό όπως τα πλείστα σημερινά, αποτελεί έναν ιδανικό χώρο για την παρατήρηση και μελέτη φαινομένων ξενοφοβίας και ρατσισμού που εμποδίζουν την αρμονική συνύπαρξη και συνεργασία μεταξύ διαφορετικών, ακόμη και αντικρουόμενων, ομάδων. Επιπρόσθετα, οι έφηβοι αποτελούν έναν ιδανικό πληθυσμό καθώς οι υπό διαμόρφωση αξίες αφήνουν περιθώρια τόσο για παρατήρηση των

μηχανισμών που τις διαμορφώνουν όσο και για παρέμβαση με στόχο τη μείωση προκαταλήψεων.

Για όλους μας ζητούμενο στο πλαίσιο που ζούμε και αναπτυσσόμαστε είναι η ασφάλεια. Στις άγραφες πλην ρητές τακτικές προσαρμογής που διδασκόμαστε και αναπαράγουμε είναι η ένταξη και ανάπτυξη μας πάντοτε στα πλαίσια μιας ομάδας. Το αίσθημα του ανήκειν είναι μια γνωστική και ψυχροσυναισθηματική διεργασία και ταυτόχρονα ανάγκη. Αν ανήκουμε σε μια κυρίαρχη (αριθμητικά τουλάχιστον) ομάδα τα πράγματα είναι ευκολότερα όσον αφορά την προσαρμογή μας. Τι συμβαίνει όμως στην περίπτωση που το πλαίσιο αναφοράς μας είναι μια ομάδα που χαρακτηρίζεται μειονεκτούσα; Τι συμβαίνει στην περίπτωση του νεαρού Ο;

Μια άμεση και «ασφαλής» επιλογή για το πλαίσιο όπου εκδηλώνεται μια σύγκρουση είναι είτε ο φυσικός είτε ο ψυχολογικός διαχωρισμός των αντικρουόμενων ατόμων ή ακόμη και ομάδων. Τι σημαίνει στην πραγματικότητα αυτός ο διαχωρισμός; Είναι επιλογή του ατόμου, δηλαδή στην ουσία υποχώρηση του «αδυνάτου» στη βούληση των «ισχυρότερων»; Μήπως στην πραγματικότητα αυτή η επιβεβλημένη φυσική ή ψυχολογική φυγή ή διαχωρισμός αποτελεί αδυναμία του ευρύτερου πλαισίου να δημιουργήσει κατάλληλες συνθήκες που θα μειώσουν τη σύγκρουση και θα αυξήσουν την εμπιστοσύνη;

Μια επίπονη, θα έλεγε κάποιος, επιλογή, είτε εκείνη ανήκει στον νεαρό είτε στο πλαίσιο, είναι η παραμονή και προσπάθεια ένταξής του. Μέσα από ποια συνθήκη θα μπορούσε να μειωθεί η προκατάληψη αυξάνοντας ταυτόχρονα την εμπιστοσύνη και, κατά συνέπεια, τη συνεργασία μεταξύ του νεαρού και των υπόλοιπων συμμαθητών του; Πώς θα μπορούσε να πετύχει κανείς την εναρμόνιση και όχι την περιθωριοποίηση, τον διαχωρισμό η την αφομοίωση του; Αν η επιλογή είναι η επαφή, μέσα από ποιες συνθήκες θα μπορούσε να επιφέρει θετικό αποτέλεσμα;

Η απλή αλλά πολύ εμπεριστατωμένη επιστημονικά έννοια της επαφής βασίζεται στην ιδέα ότι η επαφή μεταξύ ατόμων που ανήκουν σε διαφορετικές πολιτισμικές και εθνικές ομάδες υπό ορισμένες συνθήκες μειώνει την προκατάληψη και εχθρότητα. Η ανθρωπιστική αυτή άποψη ουσιαστικά υποθέτει ότι επειδή είμαστε όλοι άνθρωποι, η μεταξύ μας επαφή, έστω και αν είμαστε εχθροί, μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε κατανόηση και αμοιβαία φιλία. Προκειμένου για τη μείωση της προκατάληψης ανάμεσα σε ομάδες και τη δημιουργία θετικών στάσεων, απαραίτητη είναι η δημιουργία συνθηκών που θα απαιτούν τη συνεργασία για την επίτευξη ενός κοινού στόχου. Εντός ενός οριοθετημένου σχολικού πλαισίου κάτι τέτοιο δεν είναι ιδιαίτερα δύσκολο αρκεί να λάβει κάποιος υπόψη ότι θα πρέπει

να αξιοποιηθούν πεδία απαλλαγμένα από στενές τοπικιστικές αξίες όπως η τέχνη και γενικότερα ο πολιτισμός, η επιστήμη, η τεχνολογία. Στην προκειμένη περίπτωση η επαφή και η συνεργασία φέρνει κοντά νέα άτομα. Οι κοινές προκλήσεις θα αναδείξουν κοινούς στόχους. Οι κοινοί στόχοι θα οδηγήσουν σε κοινούς προβληματισμούς. Οι κοινοί προβληματισμοί σε κοινούς σχεδιασμούς. Οι κοινοί σχεδιασμοί σε αποτελεσματικές ή μη αποτελεσματικές λύσεις. Αυτό που στην προκειμένη περίπτωση θα πρέπει να αξιολογήσουμε δεν είναι απαραίτητα ο προορισμός αλλά το ταξίδι. Ακόμη και στην περίπτωση του δεκαπεντάχρονου που η εχθρότητα απέναντί του ερμηνεύεται ως μια αναπαραγωγή δοτών πεποιθήσεων δεν πρέπει να ξεχνάμε ότι οι νέοι δεν έχουν τις ίδιες αρνητικές μνήμες γεγονότων και κατά συνέπεια δεν τρέφουν πρωτογενή αρνητικά συναισθήματα ή προκατάληψη, τα οποία αποτελούν στοιχεία που έμμεσα τους έχουν  καλλιεργηθεί.

Θα πρέπει κάποιος να παραδεχθεί ότι ακόμη και όταν πρόκειται για νέους των οποίων τα γνωστικά σχήματα είναι λιγότερο άκαμπτα, είναι δύσκολη η προσπάθεια να αυξήσεις  την επικοινωνία και συνεργασία μεταξύ τους όταν αυτοπροσδιορίζονται με διαφορετικές εθνικές και πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες. Αυτό που την καθιστά ιδιαίτερα δυσχερή είναι το γεγονός ότι το προσωπικό σύστημα αξιών του καθενός μας αντιπροσωπεύει βαθιά ριζωμένα συναισθήματα και γνωστικά σχήματα των πλέον σημαντικών ανθρώπων και θεσμών  στη ζωή μας, όπως είναι τα πιστεύω των γονέων, οι αξίες της κοινωνίας μας, οι κατακτήσεις του πολιτισμού μας, η αντίληψη της ίδιας της ιστορίας του έθνους μας.

#### Ένα άνοιγμα προς ξένα και κάποιες φορές παραδοσιακά εχθρικά στοιχεία αποτελεί ταυτόχρονα εσωτερική απειλή και φόβο αλλοίωσης οικείων μας αξιών και σημαντικών «άλλων» μας, κάτι που είναι κάπως  οδυνηρό για τον ψυχισμό μας.

Η ταύτιση με τον δικό μας πολιτισμό δεν πρέπει να μας προκαλεί έκπληξη και ως έναν βαθμό είναι θεμιτή. Ωστόσο, ο εθνοκεντρισμός ή λανθάνων εθνοκεντρισμός δημιουργεί αισθήματα προκατάληψης απέναντι σε άλλους πολιτισμούς και έθνη που στην πράξη μας παρεμποδίζει από το να είμαστε ανοιχτοί σε νέες αξίες. Όπως ειπώθηκε προηγουμένως, ο πολυπολιτισμικός διάλογος θα πρέπει να επικεντρώνεται στους νέους. Κεντρικός επικοινωνιακός άξονας θα πρέπει να είναι η συνεργασία.

Η τεχνολογία θα μπορούσε να εξυπηρετήσει περίφημα αυτό το σκοπό. Η εξοικείωση των νέων με διαδικτυακά μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης θα μπορούσε να λάβει και πιο επίσημη και πιο ευρεία διάσταση. Παρά το γεγονός ότι οι πλείστοι ενήλικες θεωρούμε «καταστρεπτική» αυτού του είδους την επικοινωνία (τη διαδικτυακή επικοινωνία και φιλία) για την ουσία και το βάθος των ανθρώπινων σχέσεων, δεν μπορούμε παρά να συμφιλιωθούμε με αυτή την πραγματικότητα. Και να την αξιοποιήσουμε για να φέρουμε κοντά στάσεις, αξίες, επιτεύγματα, κουλτούρες, ανθρώπους.

Οι καιροί που περνούμε και διέπονται από οικονομική και κυρίως βαθιά θεσμική και ηθικοπνευματική κρίση προσφέρονται περισσότερο από ποτέ για κάτι τέτοιο. Η ευημερία ή η παρακμή παύουν να είναι δεδομένες καταστάσεις για τους λαούς καθώς η  κατάρρευση μπορεί να επέλθει εν μια νυκτί. Οι νέοι μας καλούνται να ωριμάζουν νωρίτερα. Να προσπαθούν πιο σκληρά. Να είναι ευέλικτοι και προσαρμοστικοί. Όχι μόνο στους στόχους που θέτουν, στα μέσα επίτευξής τους ή στις μορφές εργασίας που επιλέγουν. Κυρίως στα πλαίσια που αφήνουν λίγο παραπάνω χώρο όχι απλά να ονειρεύονται αλλά και να κάνουν πράξη αυτά τα όνειρα.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη όλα αυτά θα διαπιστώσει κάποιος ότι δεν υπάρχει άλλη λύση παρά να καταπολεμήσει τους μηχανισμούς που διατηρούν την αντίληψη της διαφορετικότητας, της ανωτερότητας που βασίζεται στην άγνοια, της πεποίθησης ότι οι στάσεις-αξίες μένουν αναλλοίωτες.

Όταν οι άνθρωποι καλούνται να συνεργαστούν προκειμένου να φέρουν εις πέρας κοινούς στόχους που ωφελούν εξίσου όλους ή όλες τις ομάδες τότε μπορούν να αναπτύσσονται μηχανισμοί που οδηγούν στη δημιουργία υπερκείμενης ταυτότητας μέσα από τον τονισμό των ομοιοτήτων και δημιουργική αξιοποίηση των διαφορών. Το Ζητούμενο  των σημερινών πολυπολιτισμικών κοινωνιών είναι να μπορέσουμε να δεχθούμε τη συνύπαρξη διαφορετικών ομάδων στο πλαίσιο της ίδιας υπερκείμενης ομάδας.

Βάσει των δεδομένων της εποχής που διανύουμε είμαστε υποχρεωμένοι να ξεπεράσουμε τα όρια που μας θέτουν οι πολιτισμοί στους οποίους ανήκουμε. Είμαστε υποχρεωμένοι να αναπτύξουμε μέσα μας έστω και στοιχειωδώς το αίσθημα της κατανόησης προς τους συνανθρώπους μας.

#### Ιδανικός στόχος θα ήταν να ταυτιστούμε γενικότερα με την ιδέα της ανθρωπινης ύπαρξης,

πέρα και ανεξάρτητα από πολιτισμούς, θρησκείες, κοινωνικές τάξεις, κλπ, διατηρώντας ακέραιο τον ενθουσιασμό με τον οποίο σήμερα αντιμετωπίζουμε την ταύτιση με τα μέλη της φυλής του δικού

μας πολιτισμού. Το αίσθημα του ανήκειν σε μια ομάδα με την στενή έννοια απέβη δυσλειτουργική και μονομεριστική τακτική ενώ η καλλιέργεια  μιας πιο οικουμενικής συνειδησης είναι αναγκαία καθώς συνάδει με τα κοινωνικοοικονομικά και ηθικοπνευματικά δεδομένα της εποχής.

Κλείνοντας,  θα λέγαμε ότι όλες οι προσπάθειες θα πρέπει να συνοδεύονται από κοινωνική πολιτική που θα είναι ικανή να παρέχει τα κατάλληλα οικονομικά και θεσμικά πλαίσια για την ανάπτυξη καλής θέλησης η οποία θα γεφυρώνει διαφορές και θα ενώνει λαούς και πολιτισμούς. Μια τέτοια κατάσταση θα οδηγήσει στη δημιουργία ενός παγκόσμιου πολιτισμού με τον οποίο θα σχετίζεται όλο και μεγαλύτερο κομμάτι της ανθρωπότητας. Δεν πρέπει να φοβόμαστε ότι το γεγονός αυτό θα καταστρέψει την ταυτότητα και την συνοχή των μικρών παραδοσιακών ομάδων. Ο κίνδυνος για απόλυτη πολιτισμική ή εθνική ομοιογενειοποίηση δεν υφίσταται, αλλά σε κάθε περίπτωση η ομοιογενειοποίηση αυτή είναι λιγότερο ανεπιθύμητη και απειλητική από τον πολιτισμικό τοπικισμό και τον εθνοκεντρισμό, στοιχεία από τα οποία ελπίζουμε οι κοινωνίες μας να απομακρύνονται.

Προσωπικά εξακολουθεί να με προβληματίζει το ερώτημα του υπό ποιες συνθήκες  θα μπορούσε η κοινωνία μας να καταστεί πιο φιλική για νέους σαν τον Ο. Ευχαριστώ τον Ο και όλα τα παιδιά που μου δίνουν την ευκαιρία να συνηροβληματίζομαι και να συνοραματίζομαι μαζί τους.

<b>Σημείωμα του Συγγραφέα:</b>

Το άρθρο αυτό γράφτηκε με αφορμή τον προβληματισμό ενός δεκαπεντάχρονου έφηβου ο οποίος δίνει τον προσωπικό του αγώνα για να κερδίσει την εμπιστοσύνη του περιβάλλοντός του. Το παρόν υποστηρίζεται θεωρητικά και από τη μελέτη ‘*Η Εφαρμογή της Θεωρίας της Επαφής στην Διαπολιτισμική Εκπαίδευση*’ (Καραντζά, Ν., 2010).

<b>ΝΤΕΝΙΣΑ ΚΑΡΑΝΤΖΑ</b>
<span></span>
Η Ντενίσα Καραντζά είναι εκπαιδευτική ψυχολόγος. Είναι κάτοχος πτυχίου Ψυχολογίας του Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών και Μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου Σχολικής Ψυχολογίας του Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου. Τα ερευνητικά της ενδιαφέροντα σχετίζονται με την δημιουργικότητα και την εφαρμογή της στην εκπαίδευση. Αυτή την περίοδο εργάζεται στο <i>Πρόγραμμα της Προπαρασκευαστικής Μαθητείας του Κέντρου Παραγωγικότητας</i> προσφέροντας συμβουλευτικές υπηρεσίες.



# Intemporality

by — Alexandros Demetriades

[Eng]

Time gives us direction. It gives us a comprehensive understanding of our life in a measurable way. Its irreversible nature allows us to look always ahead more than we look back. Time also allows us to heal.

Since the first years after the war when the slogan “I won’t forget” was born in an effort to solidify the population’s feelings at the time, Cyprus has slipped out of time. Praying on an ever hopeful nation, thinking that time could somehow be reversed, the timekeepers of Cyprus have stopped the clocks, buying time as a way to win a war by attrition. Both by the forces outside its control but also in trying to put a break on time’s deathless path, Cypriots cling to the past as a reassurance that nothing cannot be undone. Intemporality is a way of life in Cyprus.

I never remember my good pictures. I never remember composing or even clicking the shutter. But those are the pictures I long for. To me those are the ‘real’ pictures. Untouched by the conscious mind, life at that moment is transient and ephemeral. ‘Truth’ lies there. Photography is not an outward journey to make pictures but an inner journey to find truth.

Documenting my homeland was a test and a challenge for me. This self initiated project began as a search of my identity and was as much a photography project as it was a personal awakening. This is my attempt to understand my roots in a country from which I sometimes feel close to and sometimes feel alienated from. My mornings would sometimes be filled with joy that the unexpected lay ahead and at others with resentment that I would be confronted with the banality of the obvious and the instantly recognizable. I was more interested in seeing than showing. A journey of desperateness, or perhaps a journey of reconciliation, either way, in the end I let go of my inhibitions and sought for nothing in particular, but ‘aimlessly’ let my voyage become the project.



## ALEXANDROS DEMETRIADES

Alexandros Demetriades was born in 1967 in Nicosia, Cyprus. In 1984, Alexandros moved with his family to the U.S. He later completed a BA in Business and Economics and an MBA in Finance and Investments at George Washington University in Washington D.C. In 1996, he formed a cross-disciplinary design firm where he acted as Creative and Art Director. In 2009, Alexandros studied cinematography at New York University. Upon graduating, he returned to Cyprus to commit to photography professionally and embarked on a personal photographic journey documenting his homeland for two years (2010-11). In the meantime, he also travelled to the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa covering both newsworthy events but also personal projects. Alexandros’ second long term project “The Color of Scars” is an ongoing project that deals with life during and after the Arab Spring revolutions. Alexandros has received numerous awards, including from B&W Magazine, International Photography Awards, Photo Annual Awards and Sigma Annual Photography; in 2012, he was nominated from the Terry O’Neil Award. His work has been published in the New York Times Lens Blog, Leica Fotografie International, B&W magazine, Vervephoto: a new breed of documentary photographers, amongst others. He is currently working as a freelance photographer.

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Alexandros Demetriades

Intemporality

## Poetry Rapprochement: Translating the Cypriot Divide

by — Giorgos Moleskis & Alev Adil  
& Gür Genç & Jenan Selçuk & Neriman Cahit

[Eng / Grk]

I.

### Two Poems

by — Giorgos Moleskis  
Translated to English by — Marilena Zackheos.

#### ΑΓΙΑ ΣΕΒΕΡΗΝΗ

Αίθουσα μεσαιωνική κάστρου παλαιού,  
χώρος ταφής λαϊκών και επισκόπων,  
τώρα φιλοξενεί μια συναυλία μουσικής.  
Οι τάφοι ανοιχτοί με ό, τι απόμεινε  
από τους παλαιούς κατοίκους τους  
και σκεπασμένοι με διάφανο γυαλί  
που κάθεται απάνω ο κόσμος.

Ήχοι από Μπαχ, σόλο βιολί και έγχορδα  
γεμίζουνε όλη την αίθουσα που πάει να πετάξει.  
Πολύ δρόμο διάνυσε το Ξύλο όσο να γίνει βιολί  
και πιο πολύ ο άνθρωπος όσο να φτάσει  
ν’ αναλύει σε τέτοιους ήχους την ψυχή του.

Ήταν ένα θαύμα αυτό που ζούσαμε,  
γιατί με τόσους νεκρούς κάτω απ’ τα πόδια σου  
να σε κοιτάζουν από δέκα αιώνες μακριά χωρίς ελπίδα  
θα ’τανε δύσκολο πολύ, δίχως αυτή τη μουσική  
να πιστέψεις στην ανάσταση.

#### SAINT SEVERINA

A medieval castle chamber,  
a burying ground for laymen and bishops,  
now hosts a musical concert.  
The tombs lay open with all that remained of their occupants  
covered with transparent glass  
on which the audience members sit.

Sounds of Bach, solo violin and other string instruments  
fill up the chamber to its brink of soaring high up into the sky.  
Long was the journey of the wood to transform into a violin  
and longer was that of humanity to reach this stage  
of translating its psyche in musical notation.

What we were experiencing was a miracle  
because with all those dead people beneath our feet  
hopelessly watching us from a time ten centuries ago,  
it would have been most difficult without this music  
to believe in resurrection.

#### Η ΠΡΩΤΗ ΜΕΡΑ

Και πρώτα  
για τη χαρά της γέννησής σου  
MARIA  
ο μικρός τούτος ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ  
Ήταν πρωί κι ο αγέρας

Μύριζε σαν φρεσκοπλυμένο ρούχο

κι είχε τη γεύση του κρασιού  
από αργυρό ποτήρι  
—αδυναμίες παλιές του ποιητή—  
κι ήταν ο ήλιος πεντακάθαρος στον ουρανό  
και γέμιζε τον κόσμο με χρυσάφι  
—το μόνο χρυσάφι που καταδέχτηκε ο ποιητής—

Άνοιξε ο κόσμος την αγκαλιά του  
ειρηνικά για μια στιγμή  
και σε δέχτηκε  
υποσχόμενος  
της σοφίας το γάλα  
το λάδι όλης της γης  
και το ψωμί  
—αιώνιο όνειρο του ποιητή—  
τη μουσική  
την ποίηση  
την ευφορία της γης  
των ανέμων την ευκρασία  
και την ειρήνη του κόσμου  
—σκοπό της ζωής και πάθος του ποιητή—

Και παίρνοντάς σε απ’το χέρι  
σου μίλησα:  
Na  
το νησί ταξιδεύει πάνω σε κύματα,  
κοίτα  
βουνά δασοφόρα σφριγίζουνε δύναμη  
και πελαγίσιο αγέρα  
και κάτω η θάλασσα  
και πέρα ο κόσμος...

Το νησί ταξιδεύει στον κόσμο  
κι ο κόσμος ταξιδεύει στο νησί  
και μαζί  
η γη ταξιδεύει στο σύμπαν.

Η μεγάλη μας μοίρα κοινή  
Κι η μικρή μας μοίρα  
δική μας  
και πικρή  
και χαρούμενη  
κι ο δρόμος μακρύς...

Τους μυώνες θα σου δέσει η πέτρα,  
η γη θα πλουτίσει το σώμα σου  
και η αλμύρα θα ποτίσει την ψυχή σου.

Κι εγώ  
κόντρα στου πολέμου το μένος  
θα σου δώσω  
του στίχου τη δύναμη.

#### THE FIRST DAY

And first of all,  
for the joy of your birth,  
MARIA,  
this short PROLOGUE:

It was morning and the wind  
smelled like freshly washed cloth  
and had the taste of wine  
from a silver glass  
—the poet’s old weaknesses—  
the sun was spotless in the sky  
and filled the world with gold  
—the only gold that the poet ever accepted—  
The world opened its arms

peacefully for a moment  
and received you  
promising  
the milk of wisdom  
all of the earth’s oil  
and bread  
—an eternal dream of the poet’s—  
the music  
the poetry  
earth’s fertility  
the winds’ mildness  
and the world’s peace—  
~—life’s purpose and the poet’s passion—

And as I took you by the hand  
I said:  
Behold  
the island which journeys upon the waves,  
see  
woodland mountains abound with power  
and a sea air  
and the sea below  
and the world beyond...

The island journeys in the world  
and the world journeys in the sea  
and together  
the earth journeys in the universe.

Our great fate is one  
and our small fate  
ours  
and bitter  
and joyful  
and the road long...

Stone will fortify your muscles  
earth will enrich your flesh  
and brine will water your soul.

And I  
in contradiction to the fury of war  
will give you  
the strength of verse.

II.

## From the Prologue to the Book Entitled “Contemporary Turkish-Cypriot Poets: A Communication Attempt” («Σύγχρονοι Τουρκοκύπριοι Ποιητές: Απόπειρα Επικοινωνίας»)

Written by — Giorgos Moleskis in 2010  
Excerpt translated to English  
by — Philip Philippou and Marilena Zackheos

This book’s scope and goal are both clearly reflected in the title and subtitle. The translations were composed in the course of approximately two decades with one purpose in mind: the opening of passageways of communication with contemporary Turkish-Cypriot poets whose work was unfamiliar to us.

The first Greek-Cypriot attempt to learn more about Turkish-Cypriot poetry was made by the Central Board of the United Democratic Youth Organization (EDON) and materialized with the publication of a slim anthology of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot poetry titled *Under the Same Sky: 25 Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot Poets for a Common*

*Homeland*. Greek-Cypriots, participating in this anthology with their own poems, composed some rough word-for-word translations of Turkish-Cypriot poetry. In total, 9 Turkish-Cypriot poems were published in this work.

By the late 1980s, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot writers had begun to develop collaborations, with the most dynamic and vibrant being those in the field of drama, mainly between the Greek-Cypriot Satiriko Theater and the Turkish-Cypriot Municipal Theater of Nicosia. During those encounters, we tried to communicate in either the little Greek that some of the Turkish-Cypriots knew, or in English. At times we recruited external translators to help with the translation of poems and other texts. These meetings took place in Cyprus – under quite difficult conditions – or abroad.

In addition to the use of language, we often appropriated bodily gestures and facial expressions to communicate. We use some of these modes of communication to this very day when we meet with our fellow Turkish-Cypriot poet Fikret Demirağ. All of the following endeavors contributed in varying degrees to the preparation of the translations featured in this book: rough, word-for-word translations in Greek, precise or doubtfully accurate translations in English, one-on-one conversations with the poets themselves, at times humorous or tragicomic but persistent efforts to illustrate the meaning of poetic images, free associative thought, and allusions.

These endeavors may not have yielded the desired poetic outcome, nonetheless they contributed substantially to the understanding of the Other as a human being, and particularly so in terms of understanding our Turkish-Cypriot compatriots’ standpoint, sentiment, and poetic presence.

At any rate, these endeavors helped to bridge certain gaps. They allowed for a creative re-working of existent poetic material while paying attention also to the human dimension of the poet. Thus these Greek poems were born.

Significant toward achieving this end was an 8-day gathering among 30 Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot artists (poets, actors, musicians, painters, and cinematographers), which occurred in 1999 on the Swedish island of Gotland. Participants were given the opportunity to interact with each other for multiple hours daily, cultivating thus a culture of communication. Many more similar gatherings followed in Cyprus and Constantinople. Through these personal encounters as well as the translation of the poems, I was able to grasp a number of fundamental characteristics about contemporary Turkish-Cypriot literature. These were further confirmed through various texts, which then soon begun to appear in English, as well as some publications in Greek, such as special issues of the «New Epoch» magazine and the most important work of Anthi Kara in the periodical Exaggelos of Politis newspaper.

One noteworthy point about Turkish-Cypriot literature is that the Turkish-Cypriots, like us, have many poets. They write a lot as well. Perhaps it is a sense of place that urges them to write, with its past and present, its myth and history. They write about love, about philosophical and existential matters,

but most of all they are inspired by the mythology and history of the land, by the Cypriots’ common traumatic experiences of war, loss, the dead and missing persons, the barbed wire and the buffer zones of division, future’s uncertainty, their fear of war and their hope for peace.



III.

## Four Turkish-Cypriot Poets from Giorgos Moleskis's Anthology

Translated to Greek by — Giorgos Moleskis

Alev Adil/Αλέβ Αντίλ

### FORGOTTEN SONGS

I am not whole  
but parts of me have been  
torn up and left behind.  
No, not my heart  
much more – my tongue.  
The rest? The rest I offer you.  
Draw up your chair  
devour me  
at the dinner table of my betrayal.

The city walls of my memory  
encircle coiled back streets  
where stray boys sold garlands of jasmine  
at my childhood's coronation.  
And evening would reveal  
the palm tree jeweled with stars.  
Now I am deposed  
and a shroud of heat has shrunk  
those places, and its people too.

I cannot understand  
how I am supposed to be.  
I have lost even the idea  
of my physiology.  
Don't prod my wounds  
don't peel away the skin of afternoon  
that sleepy calm caresses me.  
Your science reinvents me,  
you make a woman out of  
the monster I was proud to be.

It is all so much false history  
our remembering has no eyes  
or potato like grows them in the dark.  
Forgotten songs suffuse us:  
mimosa bleeding scent into the night air.  
We are not whole  
bits of us torn off  
and left behind.  
Heartless, gutless, soulless  
bastards all of us.

### ΞΕΧΑΣΜΕΝΑ ΤΡΑΓΟΥΔΙΑ

Δεν είμαι ακέραια,  
κομμάτια μου έχουν ξεσχιστεί  
κ έμειναν πίσω.  
Όχι, όχι η καρδιά μου,  
πολύ περισσότερο – η γλώσσα μου.  
Τα άλλα; Τα άλλα σου τα χαρίζω.  
Φέρε την καρέκλα σου κοντά,  
καταβρόχθισέ με  
στο δείπνο της προδοσίας μου.

Τα τείχη της πόλης που θυμούμαι  
περικλείουν κυκλικά απόμερα δρομάκια  
όπου ανεπιτήρητα αγόρια πουλούσαν κλωστές με γιασεμιά  
στη στέψη της παιδικής μου ηλικίας.

Και η νύχτα αποκάλυπτε  
τη φοινικιά στολισμένη μ' αστέρια.  
Τώρα είμαι εκθρονισμένη  
κι ένα καυτό σάβανο έχει τυλίξει  
εκείνα τα παλάτια, καθώς και τους ανθρώπους.  
Δεν μπορώ να καταλάβω  
πως πρέπει να είμαι.  
Έχασα ακόμη και την ιδέα  
της φυσιολογίας μου.  
Μην ξύνεις τις πληγές μου,  
μην ξεφλουδίζεις το δέρμα του απογεύματος  
που νυσταγμένο ήρεμα με χαϊδεύει.  
Η επιστήμη σου με ανακάλυψε ξανά,  
έπλασες μια γυναίκα  
από το τέρας που περνηφανεύομουν πως είμαι.

Είναι όλα μια λάθος ιστορία,  
οι αναμνήσεις μας δεν έχουν μάτια  
σαν της πατάτας που μεγαλώνουν στο σκοτάδι.  
Μας πλημμυρίζουν ξεχασμένα τραγούδια:  
η μιμόζα αιμορραγώντας αρωματίζει τον αγέρα.  
Δεν είμαστε ακέραιοι,  
κομμάτια μας έχουν ξεσχιστεί  
κι έμειναν πίσω.  
Άκαρδοι, άδειοι, άψυχοι,  
μπάσταρδοι όλοι μας.

Gür Genç/Γκούρ Γκεντζ

Translated from Turkish by — Oya Akin

### ARTHUR RIMBAUD'S LAST DAY ON THE ISLAND

Bursting from the bitter mountain of which wine he drank  
plenty,  
he stood by the cedar tree,  
wide as the sky now, and unbuttoned his fly.  
Height was conquered and distance!  
He gazed from the well-earned place,  
over indifferent valleys, forests that never see the sea,  
and plains sworn to boredom.  
There is nothing new to write!  
Accompanied by the idle melody of an antique musical  
instrument,  
down the 'snowy mountain chaos' he pissed,  
over the to-be-founded republic of an unborn generation.

### Η ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑΙΑ ΜΕΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΘΟΥΡ ΡΕΜΠΩ ΣΤΟ ΝΗΣΙ

Μεθυσμένος από πικρό κρασί βουνίσιο, στάθηκε πλάι  
σ' ένα πεύκο πλατύ σαν τον ουρανό και ξεκούμπωσε  
το παντελόνι του.  
Την απόσταση είχε κατακτήσει και το ύψος!  
Κοίταξε από την κερδισμένη θέση του πάνω από τις αδιάφορες  
κοιλάδες, τα δάση που ποτέ δε βλέπουνε τη θάλασσα,  
τις ηλκτικές πεδιάδες.  
Δεν υπάρχει τίποτε καινούριο να γράψεις!  
Συνοδευόμενος από την τεμπέλικη μελωδία ενός αρχαίου  
μουσικού οργάνου, κατούρησε κάτω, προς το  
χάος των χιονισμένων βουνών, πάνω από  
τη μέλλουσα να γεννηθεί δημοκρατία μιας  
αγέννητης ακόμη γενιάς...

Jenan Selçuk/Ζενάν Σελτσιούκ

Translated from Turkish

by — Aydin Mehmet Ali with the poet

### THE DATE-PALM

I am a tree, a date-palm  
in some Mesaoria cemetery.  
Civilisations buried in my shade,  
their bones  
my roots.

Forty curly-haired slaves rowed  
the boats  
which brought us from Egypt.  
My grandfather a Hellene wearing an earring  
my circumciser an Ottoman barber  
a boy kidnapped into the Janissarie  
a pederast.

I was apprenticed  
to Aphrodite in spring  
Zenon in winter

You may not have realized!  
I was the model for the Lusignan architects.  
Inherited from Venetian merchants  
this sweet tongue,  
chasing pleasure  
Roman Byzantium...

A creation of the British  
my exhibition  
of split personality syndromes.  
From time to time  
my presumption that I am a human being,  
the more I am licked  
the more I hold onto lies.

Paranoias  
Stitched of flag cloth,  
a straightjacket  
made in Greece  
made in Turkey:  
I see war when I look in the water!

### Η ΦΟΙΝΙΚΙΑ

Είμαι ένα δέντρο, μια φοινικιά  
σ' ένα νεκροταφείο της Μεσαριάς.  
Στη σκιά μου είναι θαμμένοι πολλοί πολιτισμοί  
τα κόκαλά τους είναι οι ρίζες μου.

Με πλοία που τα κωπηλατούσαν σαράντα σκλάβοι  
σγουρομάλληδες  
με 'φέρανε απ' την Αίγυπτο.  
Με βάφτισε ένας Έλληνας με σκουλαρίκι,  
μου έκανε περιτομή ένας Οθωμανός μπαρμπέρης,  
παιδεραστής. Τis άνοιξε στην Αφροδίτη,  
τους χειμώνες στο Ζήνωνα μαθήτευσα.

Μπορεί να μην το έχετε καταλάβει  
εγώ ήμουν το μοντέλο για τους Λουζινιανούς αρχιτέκτονες.  
Μια κληρονομιά από Βενετούς εμπόρους.  
είναι αυτή η χαριτωμένη γλώσσα που μιλώ, που αναζητά  
απόλαυση  
Βυζαντινό-Ρωμαϊκή... Μια εφεύρεση των Βρετανών.

Αυτό είναι το σύνδρομο της διαθλασμένης μου προσωπικότητας

που προβάλλω. Από καιρού εις καιρόν  
λογαριάζοντας τον εαυτό μου για άνθρωπο, που ψεύδεται πιο πολύ  
όταν τον γλείφουν. Οι παράνοιές μου  
ένας ζουρλομανδύας ραμμένος από ρούχο σημαίας  
made in Greece, made in Turkey:

Βλέπω πόλεμο όταν κοιτάζω το νερό.

Neriman Cahit/Νεριμάν Τσιαχίτ

Translated from Turkish by — Joseph Josephides

### WE ARE MUCH TOO LATE, KLEOPATRA

Bring condiments for my Mesaoria's bread,  
Kleopatra,

Bring wine from the vineyards of Limassol,  
And let us toast to honour

Friendship and peace.

Kleopatra, bring me a handful of soil  
from the Southern land  
And let us grow peace flowers  
In our flowerpots, remaining empty for years.

We are late, very late, Kleopatra  
Have a look! Look at our sons.  
They are holding guns again.

Listen! Listen to my weeping, Kleopatra.  
Our sons are killed.  
One from your side, one from my side,  
And then time passes; year after year,  
killing after killing.  
For once, let us think  
Who is the actual loser?  
Let us replace the politicians  
We, the mothers, let us speak up  
right now, Kleopatra.

Come, Kleopatra, join me to grow  
Almond trees on the Green Line,  
Let us plant peace into their branches,  
For blossoming every spring,  
And let us blow winds of friendship together,  
Raising the children of the next generation.

I wonder if you know our song that goes  
like this:  
“In the Pentadaktylos range weed  
is a wound around our  
corn.”  
Let us sing it together, Kleopatra,  
With Bouziki and saz.

Till now, we, the mothers,  
have been always the losers.  
For once, Kleopatra,  
Let our children be the winners.

## ΑΡΓΟΥΜΕ ΠΟΛΥ, ΠΑΡΑ ΠΟΛΥ, ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑ

Φέρε μου μπαχαρικά για το μεσαρίτικο ψωμί μου, Κλεοπάτρα,

φέρε μου κρασί απ’ τα αρπέλια της Λεμεσού κι έλα να σκώσουμε τα ποτήρια μας

για τη φιλία και την ειρήνη.

Φέρε μου μια χούφτα χώμα από τα νότια μέρη, Κλεοπάτρα κι έλα να φυτέψουμε λουλούδια της ειρήνης στις γλάστρες μας που χρόνια τώρα μένουν άδειες.

Αργούμε πολύ, πάρα πολύ, Κλεοπάτρα. Κοίταξε! Κοίταξε τ’ αγόρια μας. Και πάλι πιάσανε τα όπλα.

Άκου! Άκου το κλάμα μου, Κλεοπάτρα. Τα παιδιά μας σκοτώνονται.

Ένας από τη μεριά σου, ένας από τη δική μου και τα χρόνια περνούν, το ένα μετά το άλλο, ο ένας φόνος μετά τον άλλο. Έλα να σκεφτούμε, έστω μια φορά ποιος πραγματικά είναι χαμένος! Ας πάρουμε τη θέση των πολιτικών κι ας μιλήσουμε, χωρίς χρονοτριβή, εμείς οι μάνες, Κλεοπάτρα.

Έλα, Κλεοπάτρα, έλα μαζί μου να φυτέψουμε αμυγδαλιές στην πράσινη γραμμή και να μπολιάσουμε την ειρήνη στα κλαδιά τους για ν’ ανθίζουν κάθε άνοιξη. Ας φουσκώσουμε τους αγέρηδες της φιλίας που θα σκώνουν ψηλά τους χαρταετούς των παιδιών μας.

Δε ξέρω αν γνωρίζεις το τραγούδι μας που λέει: «Στις ψηλές οροσειρές του Πενταδακτύλου τ’ αγριόχορτα πνίγουν το καλαμπόκι». Ας το τραγουδήσουμε μαζί, Κλεοπάτρα, με σάζι και μουζούκι.

Μέχρι τώρα, εμείς οι μάνες, ήμασταν πάντα οι χαμένες. Για μια φορά, Κλεοπάτρα, ας κερδίσουν τα παιδιά μας.

### GIORGOS MOLESKIS

Giorgos Moleskis was born in 1946. He studied at the Nicosia English College and at the Moscow State University. He has an M.A. degree in Russian Language and Literature and a Ph.D. degree in Literature. He worked for several years as Cultural officer at the Larnaca-Cyprus Municipality. From 1987 until 2007 he worked at the Cultural Services Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture, where he held the position of Senior Cultural Officer. Currently, he is the Executive Adviser of the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra Foundation. Giorgos Moleskis has published twelve books of poetry, a novel, a study on the poet Pavlos Liasidis, who wrote in the Cyprus dialect, four books with poetry translations from English and Russian languages, including an anthology of twentieth century Russian Poets. Some of his poetry books were translated and published in France, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Albania. Two of his books have been awarded state prizes for poetry.

### ALEV ADIL

Alev Adil was born in 1963 in Cyprus to a Turkish-Cypriot father and a British mother. She attended the English School Nicosia and studied Philosophy in London. She lives in England, where she currently teaches *Communication and Criticism* at the University of Greenwich. Alev Adil writes in English. This does not imply, however, that she is not a Turkish-Cypriot poetess. She has thus been included in this issue and she is the only one whose poems have been translated directly from the original. Her poems were featured in a range of British publications and she has presented her work at various cultural events and on the radio. Her first book of poetry, *Venus Inters*, was published in 2004. She writes primarily about culture and identity, Cyprus and its contemporary tragic history, and the refugee experience. She has taken part in many poetry functions across Cyprus. In England, she is actively involved in activities concerning refugees, immigrants, and other intercultural issues.

### GÜR GENÇ

Gür Genç is a pen name for Gürgeç Korkmazel. He was born in Paphos in 1969 and attended the Technical Lyceum of Nicosia. He spent many years in Turkey and Great Britain. He is both a poet and translator. His poetry is characterized by acute skepticism of traditional values and a subversive sensibility, often expressed in representations of overt sexuality. His language use is neoteric and, while his images often mark 1974 as their starting point, they also mix a subject matter of the inquiry generation.

### JENAN SELÇUK

Jenan Selçuk was born in the village of Stavrokonno in Paphos district. He studied *International Relations*. His poems are marked by a subversive and anarchic sentiment, and language that aims to challenge and shock the reader.

### NERIMAN CAHIT

Neriman Cahit was born in 1937 in Kyrenia. She is a well-known activist and journalist. In the period between 1988 and 2006, seven of her books were published—featuring articles, essays and biographies—as were five poetry collections. Key preoccupation in her poetry is the woman’s struggle in oppressive patriarchal society. She has participated in many literary gatherings. Her poems were translated in several different languages. She has profound social and political sensitivities and is actively involved in various movements.

## Does Water Recognize Borders? Reconciliation through Water in Cyprus

by — Dimitrios Zikos && Alevgül H. Şorman

[Eng]

### 1. Introduction

Cyprus is facing increasing challenges at various levels: from an environmental perspective, we observe rapid climatic changes and desertification due to depleted groundwater resources and extreme water scarcity. From an economic perspective, the discovery of hydrocarbons has led to extreme optimism, to be soon replaced by despair due to the emerging economic crisis. From a socio-political perspective, the bi-communal efforts initiated since 2008 and the progress made since the opening of the borders and the EU accession has led to little tangible results. These challenges regularly tend to dilute and divert the interest of the political agenda.

In this context, rather than being locked into a purely political debate concerning the prospects of a viable solution for the two Cypriot communities, our aim is to shift the discussion, that moves in circles since 1974, to a contemporary issue demanding urgent attention: water scarcity, which imposes a threat to the security of all Islanders. The argument put forward here is that the essential need to share water may create a common platform and foster a mode of negotiation in which multiple viewpoints from both communities can be incorporated. Thus, our hypothesis is that the process of reconciliation can be undertaken bottom-up, by all social actors affected by this common threat, leading to collaborative scenaria.

### 2. Peace-building and Common Pool Resources

Our research departs from two main schools of thought that dominate the discourses relating to the correlation between conflicts and natural resources. The first is based on the assumption that competing interests of users over a finite quantity of resources lead to unavoidable conflicts, varying from public protest to actual armed engagement (cf. Gleick, 2008, 1993; Ohlsson, 2000; Homer-Dixon & Blitt, 1998; Homer-Dixon, 1994; Postel, 1992). A second stream of literature (cf. Carius, 2006; Hagmann, 2005; Allan, 1998;

Dowdeswell, 1998; Wolf, 1998) argues that such struggle usually leads to beneficial arrangements, promoting cooperation and peace building. We follow a synthesizing approach, suggesting that

natural resources may function both as a unifier and as a conflict instigator,

depending on case-specific circumstances and processes (cf. Mostert, 2003; Toset et al., 2000). As such, natural resources may either function as the vehicle for successful negotiation, transforming a potential conflict and leading to consensus building, collaboration and collective action, or increase competition which may escalate into conflict.

In this ongoing debate, water is considered emblematic within both schools and in the political arena alike. It has recently been observed that water may act as a strong unifier and foster cooperation in regions with relatively strong institutions or/and stakeholders’ willingness to bargain and negotiate. Conversely, weak or absent institutions affect the negotiating process resulting in an escalation of pre-existing conflicts or the introduction of new ones (Wolf, 2007; van der Molen & Hilderling, 2005; Shiva, 2002).

Usually, the way in which water is generally perceived falls into two distinct and common forms of appraisal: water as a commodity, an asset that is to be owned by a certain actor versus water as common property, a resource for the benefit of all (Aguilera-Klink et al., 2000).

In the first dominant paradigm, actors are responsible for meeting own demands in which competition prevails over a scarce resource. In this type of setting, Homer-Dixon (1999) argues that the intensification of scarcity and increasing demands create additional stress factors and add to potential crises. The contrary vision, as illustrated by Wolf (2007), argues that successful negotiations over allocation of water are those based on needs rather than rights. He distinguishes two key reasons for this phenomenon: (i) the psychology of negotiations, where the negotiator sooner or later empathises and realises that the needs of the people he contests are similar to those of the people he represents and (ii) the needs can be codified and quantified and thus become a criterion for negotiation while rights offer little space for bargaining.

Until now, both Cypriot communities are relying on individual efforts to deal with scarcity. This in return, increases dependencies either at political level (e.g the water-pipe project from Turkey, or water import from Greece) or at resource level (e.g desalination plants and the subsequent energy demand), rather than

contributing to a long-term solution that would securitize the resource for the entire Island.

We would like to propose a shift to the dominant narrative towards the second viewpoint, arguing that

water, seen as a common property for the benefit of all, can constitute an opportunity to abolish not only the natural but most importantly the mind-made borders between the two Cypriot communities

and thus contribute towards a mutually secure and prosperous future.

### 3. Discussion on the Conducted Research

In order to explore our proposition, we employed a number of novel tools, methods and methodologies applied during three research projects from 2009 to 2012<sup>1</sup>: under the EU *FP7 Project GoverNat*, we first investigated the behavioural and cooperative dimension of water governance on the island through game theoretical models. Subsequently, the PRIO-Cyprus funded project “*Cypriot Natural Resources as a Common Space*” explored the implications of the previous findings for the ongoing reunification and reconciliation process and applied a needs-based approach (Max-Neef, 1991; Wolf, 2007), focusing on water. Finally, the project “*Sharing Water and Environmental Values: Peace Construction efforts in Cyprus*”, funded by ICIP and AGAUR, conducted further field work, Geographic Information Systems and participatory mapping and examined possible collaborative scenarios.<sup>2</sup>

The spearhead of our research is grounded on state-of-the-art knowledge of Elinor Ostrom’s, (2009 Nobel Prize Laureate) work on Common Pool Resources (CPR)<sup>3</sup> (Ostrom 1990, 2005, 2007) and, especially, the role of trust between users for the success of natural resource management. Ostrom continually illustrated that there are certain “panacea traps” where far too many policies are recommended as optimal solutions; yet, the “panacea options” – especially when proposed and devised by third parties– may not be in line with the desires of the communities themselves.

Based on Ostrom’s work, we conducted several CPR “games” in both communities, in which participants were called to make resource harvesting decisions in a real-time experimental environment (Cardenas, et al., 2008; Janssen, M., 2010). This enabled us to investigate the interplay between resource dynamics and local perceptions



on water management, distribution and responding to needs of both communities on the island. The games with farmers and students were held in Famagusta, Alayköy and in Bellapis (north of the UN Buffer Zone) and in Nicosia and Panagia, Paphos (south of the UN Buffer Zone).

Moreover, we have conducted a water metabolism analysis, which accounts for the quantity of water demand and consumption that flow through the distinct sectoral compartments of the society (Alcantara Escolano et al., 2012) especially within the agricultural sector. We then conducted an integrated quantitative analysis with the objective of assessing the situation on the island in terms of physical water scarcity, water allocation and distribution policy and resulting socially constructed scarcity.

#### 4. Results

We have intended to draw attention to the possibility of uniting multiple parties with different objectives under a common need – the very essence of water as a scarce and yet vital resource for all.

Relying on our action-research methodology, we spent a long time empathizing with both communities in order to move beyond single-dimensional knowledge and generating knowledge through a reflective process with the involvement of all actors. We observed that most citizens we discussed the matter with acknowledged the urgency of the situation regarding water scarcity, highlighting the deleterious consequences of inaction: neither side has the luxury to wait for resolution at a political level.

The diverse perceptions held by stakeholders, as observed in the games, revealed immense potential for cooperation based on shared core values on water. Given a certain preconditioning of water scarcity, most participants were open for prioritizing collaboration on preserving scarce resources for a common well-being, agreeing to the utmost condition that a communal management with the participation and consensus of neighbours yields higher degrees of long-term preservation of water rather than competition over this scant resource for short-term individual benefits.

This discourse not only shows possible room for transcending political discussions dominated by “national” and “ethnic” security issues, but also serves as a reminder of a common-shared natural heritage of Cyprus as a whole, creating an opportunity to focus on common needs, perceptions and values as future peace building opportunities.

Game theoretical models provided further useful insights on the depletion of shared groundwater reservoirs. Two important water reservoirs of the island indeed do not recognise “borders”. The shared Center and Western Mesaoria (CY\_17) and the Kokkinochoria (CY\_1) groundwater basins are severally stressed. Even more the particular geomorphology of the island and the in-island water transport infrastructure link the various river basins and water reservoirs with one another threatening to “contaminate” other seemingly unaffected reservoirs (Ministry of Agriculture, 2012).

CY\_17 is the island’s second largest and most productive groundwater reservoir, characterized as extremely stressed and in constant deterioration since 1974 (“poor quantity”). The CY\_1 reservoir is smaller and considered to be in a “poor” state, both in terms of quantity and quality, degraded by urban and agricultural waste and saltwater intrusion. This reservoir is under constant pressure from increased abstraction for agriculture. This can be understood as a free-access situation where each of the involved actors (in this case farmers from both communities) is better off abstracting as much water as possible, given that common monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms are absent. This, according to Hardin (1968), will deterministically lead to a tragedy of the commons, in this case the degradation and depletion of the shared reservoirs.

Ostrom’s notion of panaceas is particularly relevant in our socio-political context.

“Magic solutions” appear and disappear in all the interaction arenas between the Cypriot communities:

the referendum will offer a solution, joining the EU will solve everything, desalination will provide infinite water, hydrocarbons will create vast wealth and so forth. Needless to say, none of these panaceas met the expectations of the Cypriots. Even if we focus entirely on water, the “external factor”, or the “patronage” of the two Cypriot communities by third parties plays a crucial role. Indeed a recent meta-analysis of interview material showed the co-existence of two “mentalities”. On the one hand, Cypriots from both communities are well aware of the necessity of Island-wide common institutions governing the scarce natural resources, especially water. On the other, they are willing to accept, or at least tolerate, externally imposed institutions from various patrons as panaceas (Zikos and Roggero 2013).

#### 5. Conclusions

We would like to keep our concluding section short as further research is required on the identification of those factors that would allow a bottom-up approach of the two communities based on strong cooperation built around the diminishing water resources. What we feel urgent is to underline the possibility of

embarking on a process of consensus building

among stakeholders through acknowledging “needs” related to water resources in which communities themselves have the potential to act as agents in constructing and prioritising cooperation. We have sufficient evidence that all the necessary material to initiate such an approach already exists amongst the Cypriots. Implementation also seems feasible. There are increasing bi-communal activities fostered by particularly active NGOs and citizens promoting agendas well reflecting the needs of the population rather this of the political elites and patrons. What still needs to be widely acknowledged though is the severe threat equally challenging the very existence of all Islanders: water scarcity.

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#### FOOTNOTES

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2. [www.sharewatercyprus.net](http://www.sharewatercyprus.net)
3. Common-pool resources (CPRs) are natural or human-made resources where one person's use subtracts from another's use and where it is often necessary, but difficult and costly, to exclude other users outside the group from using the resource (Digital Library of the Commons Dictionary, Indiana University).

#### DIMITRIOS ZIKOS

Dr. Dimitrios Zikos was trained as an economist and graduated from the University of Piraeus, Department of Statistics. He gradually moved to more socio-political and environmental themes by attending first a postgraduate course on Environmental Management in the University of Liverpool, and then by completing a PhD in Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences. He worked as a researcher on water governance issues and participatory procedures from 2000 to 2006 in the Institute for Urban Environment and Human Resources in Athens, Greece. During this period he acquired long experience in focus group facilitation, project management, organisation of workshops and conferences etc. He was also involved in the university courses by teaching environmental conflict resolution at postgraduate level. Since April 2010 Dimitrios has been employed by the Humboldt University, division of Resource Economics, in Berlin, where he has been coordinating the “Sustainable Hyderabad” and the “Promotion of Institutional Development for Common Pool Resources Management in Central Asia” projects. Since 2013 he has been teaching the course “Advanced Empirical Methodology for SES Analysis” in the MSc. Integrated Natural Resource Management at Humboldt University, Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture.

#### ALEVGÜL H. ŞORMAN

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## Poverty, Social Exclusion and the Gaps in the Domestic Violence Victim Support System

by — Christina Kaili

[Eng]

This article is a republication. It was first presented at the "Human Rights and Violent Behaviour: The Social and Educational Perspective" Conference (18-19 November, 2011) organized by the UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, University of Cyprus, and published in the conference proceedings (November 2012). Permission to edit and republish has been received from the author.

### Introduction

Although much progress has been made in highlighting the extent and severity of domestic violence, a great deal still remains to be done in terms of how it is treated and dealt with in Cyprus. The scope of the paper is to examine the main links between domestic violence against women and poverty and social exclusion, as experienced by women who have been victims of violence in Cyprus. The paper provides a critical assessment of current policies and services for the support and assistance of women-victims of domestic violence, through a gender equality perspective<sup>1</sup>.

The paper is based on two qualitative research projects carried out by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in 2010, focusing on the links between domestic violence against women and poverty and social exclusion, as well as on an assessment of all aspects of implementation of the relevant legislation and policies and the victim support system in Cyprus. The first project is entitled “Women, Poverty and Social Exclusion”<sup>2</sup>, and it was funded by the Cyprus Government within the framework of the European Year to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010, with the aim to investigate the links between domestic violence, poverty and social exclusion, with specific regard to existing structures and services provided to victims of domestic violence. It also intended to evaluate whether these services reflected and met the needs of women experiencing domestic violence. The second research project, entitled “REACT to Domestic Violence: Building a Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence”<sup>3</sup>, and funded by the European Commission Daphne III Program, aimed to gain and share knowledge, understanding and assess all aspects of implementation of the relevant legislation and policies on domestic violence, as well as the existing victim support system in Cyprus.

Both projects employed a gender approach and their findings/outcomes complemented each other. In this way, more informed recommendations could be made for policy formation, early prevention and, most importantly, strategies in building an effective victim support system for victims of domestic violence. The researchers expand the scope of the two research projects with policy recommendations aiming to improve existing structures and services in order to reflect the needs of women victims of domestic violence and reduce their risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>4</sup>

For the purposes of both research projects, domestic violence was defined as the most common form of violence against women that involves a pattern of abusive and threatening behaviours that may include physical, emotional, economic and sexual violence as well as intimidation, isolation and coercion. This definition refers to the concept of 'power' and thus including acts of violence arising from a 'power relationship'; that men most often use against their intimate partners, such as current or former spouses, girlfriends, or dating partners.

### Methodological Frameworks

A feminist-gender equality approach has been applied for the purposes of the research studies using qualitative methods. In utilizing a gender approach and gender analysis, the focus was on the system which determines gender roles/responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and on support systems and mechanisms existing or absenting on the particular issue. The qualitative analysis was based on twelve semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with women victims of domestic violence who had used the services offered by the non-governmental organization that operates the only shelter available for victims of domestic violence in Cyprus. The interviewees were Cypriot and migrant women, aged 24–58, from all social classes. The qualitative analysis was also based on eight semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with policy makers and government officials from all relevant ministries and government departments as well as front line service providers including the police, the social welfare services and NGOs.<sup>5</sup> Information was also gathered through the review of existing policies, strategies, national action plans, systematic monitoring of the media best practices, research and police criminal statistics at both local and European levels.

### Domestic Violence in Cyprus: Recent Trends

The prevalence of reported domestic violence has risen dramatically in the last decade. Incidents of reported domestic violence to the Police show a disturbing upward trend with reported cases almost doubling in the last 4 years. Similarly, reports to the only NGO providing services to victims of domestic violence have tripled over the years 2004–2010 (from 397 cases in 2004 to 1,053 cases in 2010). In terms of gender, the majority of victims in 2010 were women at 85,3%. Of these cases, 95,5% were classified as involving psychological violence, 57,3% physical violence and 1,9% sexual violence.<sup>6</sup>

Despite not being defined as such by the Cypriot legislative and policy framework, domestic violence is a gendered phenomenon and inextricably linked to gender [in]equality and unequal power relations between women and men. Cyprus has a comprehensive legal framework to address violence in the family which has been the basis of all action on domestic violence to date. However, this poses a critical problem: The term violence in the family as defined by the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law 119(I) of 2000 and 212(I) of 2004, is gender-neutral and covers violent behaviour perpetrated by any member of the family toward any member of the family ignoring the gender specificities of the violence. Moreover, the term “family violence” fails to highlight that violence against women largely stems from women's subordinate status in society.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it is evident that domestic violence is not, in fact, recognized or defined as a form of violence against women. As almost all the organizations working on issues of violence in Cyprus employ the Cypriot legal definition as given by the Cyprus law on family violence, this has resulted in a lack of gender sensitivity, particularly in support and protection measures as will be seen further below. It has also resulted in a lack of awareness of the dynamics of domestic violence, and its links to gender [in]equality and social norms and stereotypes.

Although the increase in reporting rates can partly be explained by increased awareness and a relatively good legislative framework (on family violence only), the lack of prevalence studies hides the fact that violence against women is, as elsewhere, one of the least reported crimes. This is due to ingrained socio-cultural attitudes that render violent behaviour normal and acceptable, persistent economic inequalities between women and men, a lack of confidence in the ability of

the relevant authorities, a total lack of resources for women-victims of violence, fear of social stigmatization, and a general culture of victim blaming in relation to violence against women.<sup>8</sup>

Even more discouraging is the high level of ‘attrition’<sup>9</sup> in the course of investigations and prosecutions of domestic violence.<sup>10</sup> According to a report by Veis (2010), a very high number of cases (60%) of reported do not develop into criminal investigations, and even less proceed to court. Half of those that do make it through the legal process are suspended, interrupted, withdrawn or rejected by the courts.<sup>11</sup> Of the number of cases recorded in court, only 38% resulted in a conviction (66% of those cases completed in the courts) and 34% of cases resulted in acquittals. The conviction rate is also appallingly low, and penalties do not provide any real deterrent to perpetrators and are not preventative on a wider social level. The majority of the penalties imposed were fines (74%), 21% imprisonment and/or suspended sentence and 5% probation. It is thereby evident that there is clear and overwhelming preference for imposing monetary fines and financial guarantees.<sup>12</sup> Generally, the penalties are up to 5 years’ imprisonment, pecuniary penalties or a combination of both. According to Veis, the minimum monetary fine imposed was approx. 50 Euros and the maximum approx. 3,850 Euros. In terms of prison sentences, the maximum penalty was 12 years and the minimum just 10 days. The median prison sentence during the period under study was 6 months and the median monetary fine was approximately 500 Euros.

The interviewees felt that the high level of such a “justice gap” is directly related to deficits in the victim support system that does not do enough to encourage victims to proceed with criminal investigations.

The criminal justice process can be an ordeal and there can be a valid concern for the continuing safety of the victim.

The high levels of attrition are also strongly linked to the economic dependency of women on their partners and to the lack of adequate re-integration and social inclusion mechanisms that would allow women to exit violent relationships and pursue independent lives.

### Poverty and Social Exclusion has a Woman’s Face

Poverty and social exclusion in Cyprus, as elsewhere in Europe, has a woman's face and is the result of pervasive inequalities between women

and men. At the same time, violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of women's poverty and social exclusion.<sup>13</sup> Women's marginalization in the labour market and reduced economic sources, exclusion from education and life-long learning, underrepresentation in political and public life, the persistent wage gap between men and women, reduced pensions and the lack of adequate child care services, homelessness, single-parenthood, risk of being deported and/or excluded from public support and assistance due to migration status are all ‘poverty traps’ that render women poorer and more vulnerable than men regardless of age or social group.<sup>14</sup>

According to independent analysts, experts and available data, the conditions of social integration and social cohesion in Cyprus is stable, the risk of poverty among the general population to reach 16% (rate consistent with the average of the 27 EU Member States). However, a thorough analysis of the data showed that certain groups like the elderly, single parents, people living alone, immigrants from third countries and asylum seekers are among the poorest and most vulnerable social groups in Cyprus. A very high proportion of older people face a significant risk of poverty (51% of people aged 65 years compared with 10% of those aged 18-64). The numbers are even more striking in the case of elderly people living alone with the rate reaching 70%. Older women face a significantly higher risk of poverty than men (54% of elderly women versus 47% of men, the highest rate in the EU27). This difference creates scepticism as to the circumstances that led these women in this vulnerable position. According to these data,

it is safe to conclude that the increased risk of poverty faced by women is a consequence of the marginalization of their position in relation to employment, income and overall social integration.

This translates into lower pensions and higher dependence of women on social pensions and public assistance (women represent 98% of recipients of social pension). The indicators also show that social pensions and other benefits do not protect people most at risk of poverty. However, there is no evidence that pension systems will be reformed to facilitate the efficient transfer of benefits to retirees who have relatively higher levels of poverty.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, gender is not recognized in practice and in specific policies, legislation and national strategies relating to domestic violence and the fight against poverty and social

exclusion. In most cases, a gender-less discourse is reflected with generalized or undetermined terms used such as ‘Violence among family members, single parents, unemployed, disabled, etc’. At best, the policies refer to women as a 'vulnerable group' of people, but this is not enough to provide the full picture of the gender dimension of the problem or create the foundations needed to reflect the specific needs of women, not only on a policy, but also on a practical level.

The research results revealed that violence against women exacerbates women's risk of poverty and social exclusion. Violence constitutes a major obstacle to women's access to various tangible and intangible resources, and has serious implications on various aspects of their lives. The most noticeable difference occurs between individuals who live alone, with 52% of women living alone to be at risk of poverty compared to 28% of men.<sup>16</sup> Single parenthood, affecting the vast majority of women who participated in the research study, in itself increases the risk of poverty by one third. It is estimated that 1 in 3 single parents (33%) face this risk, regardless of whether they work or not. This risk is again directly related to gender as 9 in 10 single parents are women.<sup>17</sup>

Women-victims of violence also found themselves inactive, unemployed or underemployed, either due to coercion by their violent partners or due to poor health as a consequence of violence. For instance, a low level of education significantly reduces women's access to the labour market, hence the opportunities for obtaining a stable and decent income. Research focusing on violence and the education level of victims and perpetrators is often conflicting. In recent years there is a general assumption that violence affects all women, without exception, even women with high educational level, which is consistent with the results of the research studies mentioned in this paper. Interestingly, most female victims are not satisfied with their current level of education and would prefer to have the opportunity to continue their education; they admitted that they had to compromise because of family responsibilities on childcare, but also to some extent due to the impact of violence on their psychological health, which did not make education a priority. Migrant women face additional problems in relation to their educational level as they are often subject to non-recognition of academic qualifications, skills and abilities.

‘My husband, ex- husband... he did everything so I'll never have anything... never have nothing on my name, never have even good salary ... he is the boss...’  
– Domestic Violence Victim



Most women interviewed were subject to psychological and physical violence, but also economic violence with their income monitored and controlled by their partners. In some cases, women had been forced to give partners power of attorney, giving them the right to manage all their financial affairs and personal property.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most important issues raised by the victims interviewed was the lack of affordable and accessible child care services to facilitate access to the labour market which in turn diminished their ability to generate an independent and adequate income after exiting a violent relationship.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, women did not have information on or access to vocational training programmes that would provide them with the skills required to access better-paid employment.<sup>20</sup> Social inclusion and (re) integration programmes are not an integral part of the victim support system and are only available to women if they meet criteria for public assistance.<sup>21</sup> Many women confessed that, even if receiving public assistance, their income was not sufficient to meet their basic needs and the needs of their children.

A number of the women that participated in the study were of migrant background that experienced additional obstacles related to their lack of independent migration status. This would result in delays in accessing public assistance including income support and housing. The lack of affordable childcare and the absence of supportive social networks such as family and friends contributed to their further exclusion from the labour market and their dependence on welfare benefits.

Support system fails to provide women with what they need

Both research studies also revealed tremendous gaps in the victim support system. Women categorically expressed their dissatisfaction with available support provisions, particularly those provided by the Social Welfare Services who are the main providers of victim support in Cyprus. Victims claimed they were treated with apathy and lack of sensitivity and professionalism by welfare officers and experienced lengthy delays when applying for public assistance. NGOs can and do play a critical role in the identification, referral, and provision of support to victims of domestic violence. Women, mainly of migrant background staying in the NGO run shelter, confessed that they felt anxious about their future and uncertain as to how they would stand on their feet when their time in the shelter expires. Women pointed to the need for additional psychological support

and empowerment programmes as well as measures that would facilitate their access to the labour market, including low-cost quality childcare services.

The Police remain the first point of contact for victims requesting support and assistance. According to the Police, this is due to the fact that the reporting of domestic violence usually takes places late in the afternoon, evening, or on weekends where police stations are the only available and accessible service for victims, given that other government services, most notable the Social Welfare Services, are closed.<sup>22</sup> Given that domestic violence is one of the most underreported crimes, the lack of available services on a 24 hour basis for victims that may not want to report to the Police at first instance, can be seen as a serious flaw in the system.

The lack of effective support structures is also related to the high incidence of attrition in domestic violence cases as expressed by a representative of the Police:

“Many domestic violence cases are suspended because of one vital factor, the deep deficit in the support framework for domestic violence victims. Once a case leaves the police, there is a question mark as to whether there is substantial support for the victim. It takes 1-2 years or more for a case to be completed. What happens to the victim during this time? Typically support and treatment exists but it is not structured in a specific context, with supportive structures to help the victim cope with the difficulties that arise after a complaint.” Representative, Domestic Violence & Child Abuse Office, Criminal Investigation – Department Cyprus Police Headquarters

The Law Services play a very small role in effective victim support which directly affects the rates of attrition and conviction in domestic violence cases. With regard to legal support provided by public prosecutors, legal counselors and lawyers, victims of violence expressed deep dissatisfaction with the support provided indicating that they were not provided with adequate and sufficient information with regard to the legal process, in relation to their rights, and even complained that their cases had been dealt with negligently.<sup>23</sup>

In general, the lack of trained and experienced professionals in front-line services poses serious questions as to the quality of services provided, as well as to the effective inter-agency cooperation which is essential in

combating domestic violence. According to an internal evaluation of the Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures, it is clear that not all recommendations and guidelines are followed and, as such, the Manual is currently being revised based on the recommendations made in the evaluation.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, none of the services evaluated incorporated a gender perspective in their work and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the dynamics of violence against women. None of the service providers interviewed recognized the link between domestic violence against women and inequality between women and men, and all adopted the legal definition of family violence which is gender blind.

Stereotypical attitudes and ‘victim blaming’ prevail among those that have responsibility for protecting victims,

which means that not only are victims denied the support they need, but also that perpetrators can exercise violence with impunity.

Although in many countries violence against women, and particularly domestic violence, is framed as a public health issue, it is not framed as such in Cyprus and, as a result, the public health services play almost no role in data collection, prevention (in terms of early detection, awareness raising, etc), and treatment of domestic violence. It is widely recognized that the Health Services can play a vital role in helping identify abuse early, providing victims with the necessary treatment and referring women to appropriate care in order to prevent the escalation of violence and its short and long term health consequences. According to an evaluation of the role of the health services in handling domestic violence cases, health professionals have neither the time nor the training to take full responsibility for the care of victims. Indeed, health professionals reveal a general lack of awareness on the causes and consequences of domestic violence and tend to justify the actions of perpetrators and transfer responsibility on the victims.<sup>25</sup> There is no systematic programme for specialized training of health professionals in the area of domestic violence and health professionals themselves feel that they are not adequately trained to identify victims of violence or intervene effectively.

Another issue that arose was that state shelters and other facilities specifically designed for housing victims of domestic violence are non-existent, and only one NGO-run shelter is currently in operation with only 12 places for women and their children. If the number of women’s shelters is an indication of a state’s political will to address domestic violence,

then it is obvious that this issue is not being addressed as a political priority.

In Cyprus, programmes for the social inclusion and reintegration of victims of violence are rare and are not part and parcel of support and assistance provided by relevant government services and/or NGOs. Focus is on providing immediate assistance such as accommodation and board, as well as legal advice and support. When designing integration/ social inclusion programmes, it is essential that those factors that contribute to the marginalization of women in all areas and which render them socially vulnerable are addressed. Although economic assistance is important, it must be emphasised that it cannot be considered a cure-all in addressing the needs of victims of violence. Such programmes must include measures for adequate housing, employment, vocational training, childcare, among others and be linked to the gender equality and women’s rights framework. So, although social benefits are vital for the immediate support of victims of violence, these must be accompanied by active inclusion policies that take into account the specific needs of women from a gender perspective.

#### What do Women Want? Conclusions

In terms of prevention, action has mostly focused on secondary and tertiary prevention and has failed to address the root causes of violence. The links between violence against women and gender inequality in all spheres of life have not been analysed or addressed in any meaningful way in prevention programmes and activities.

Prevention activities have largely taken the form of public awareness raising actions with no real evidence of their impact on the wider society. Less attention has been placed on school-based interventions<sup>26</sup> with the exception of a number of NGOs that work with young people and adolescents on a systematic basis to challenge those gender-based attitudes and perceptions that support and perpetuate violence against women.<sup>27</sup> Despite the promise that comprehensive sexuality education was to be incorporated into the school curriculums during the recent educational reforms, this did not take place presenting a missed opportunity to sensitize young people and challenge prevailing knowledge and attitudes on gender relations and sexuality issues.

Domestic violence and poverty and social exclusion are highly gendered phenomena and must be interpreted within the broader social framework of gender inequality and traditional power relations between women and men. The research projects demonstrate that poverty and social exclusion are

indeed both a cause and a consequence of domestic violence against women. Various poverty traps experienced by women<sup>28</sup> in Cyprus and the main barriers they face in leaving violent relationships and living independent lives free from violence were analysed and an assessment made of the victim support system and mechanisms. Focusing on a gender-sensitive evaluation and assessment of all aspects of implementation of the relevant legislation<sup>29</sup> and policies on domestic violence, the two research studies revealed the lack of systematic national data on the prevalence of domestic violence; the lack of gender awareness and expertise among relevant stakeholders dealing with victims of domestic violence, be it by the state or NGOs; and gaps and weaknesses in the provision of shelters and counselling services for women.

When addressing domestic violence against women the links between women’s marginalization and violence must be recognized and systematically addressed if we are to tackle the root causes of the social problem. Within this framework,

the support system must not only provide women with adequate psychosocial support, but also aim to provide those opportunities that will help women regain control over their lives and live in dignity free from violence.

Ensuring that victims are provided with continuing specialized support and protection is vital in order to raise the number of women willing to support criminal prosecutions through the courts. Finally, there is a need for the police, the judiciary, and the service providers to understand the dynamics of domestic violence in order to appreciate the particular difficulties that victims face in reporting incidents, let alone supporting investigations and prosecutions.

#### Recommendations

→ Systematic research on the extent of these crimes needs to be conducted to better understand the real dimensions of the problem and to better inform policy and support, and prevention campaigns.

→ Domestic violence needs to be recognized as a form of violence against women and interpreted within the context of gender inequality and traditional power relations between women and men. This needs to be reflected in the legislative framework and in all actions to prevent and combat domestic violence.

→ The victims of domestic violence need to be recognized as a vulnerable group of the population and social inclusion policies need to reflect and respond to their needs.

→ Creation of adequate government measures, strategies, policies and programmes for day-care services, children and elderly people who can contribute significantly to reconcile family and professional life.

→ Award priority to support single-parent families: policies that involve the active integration to be focused and tailored to the needs of single-parent families and to integrate the gender dimension in their design and implementation.

→ The gendered dimensions of those factors that render women vulnerable to violence need to, among other, be mainstreamed into anti-violence policy including marginalization in the labour market, the lack of affordable, quality child care services, the gender pay gap among others.

→ Timetables, deadlines, and specific budgets for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence must be set.

→ Thoroughly monitor and evaluate the measures and strategies of the National Action Plan for Combating Domestic Violence and ensure that such monitoring is undertaken by an independent organization that is not a party to the NAP.

→ A systematic plan of action for the prevention of violence against women is needed that will include awareness campaigns through the media and other sources, which will be monitored as to its implementation, regularity, target group and evaluation.

→ Cooperation among governmental departments as well as cooperation between governmental departments and NGOs must be clearly re-examined and a new, revised Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures drafted.

→ NGOs and women’s organizations must be systematically consulted in the formulation and implementation of policies and measures to combat domestic violence and provision of greater financial support to those that provide services to victims of violence. The funding and NGO participation in policy and services must be transparent and regulated by law.

→ The establishment of a domestic violence crisis centre that will provide, among other, a range of high quality, comprehensive and coordinated specialized services for women including legal assistance, counselling services, psychosocial support, health services..

→ The state must meet its obligation to provide safe shelter to women-victims of violence and their children according to recommendations by the Council of Europe.

→ The state must sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence,

which defines and criminalises all forms of male violence against women.

→ A 24-hour hotline for victims of domestic violence must become operational without delay with specialized staff for immediate urgent intervention.

→ Organize systematic and specialised training using a gender-sensitive approach for all actors involved in domestic violence, including the police, health professionals, social welfare services, judiciary and legal professionals.

→ Women who are victims of domestic violence must be able to receive autonomous and independent residence status regardless of migration status.

→ Accessible and free legal assistance should be provided to all women-victims of domestic violence prior to and during the legal proceedings.

→ Women-victims of domestic violence must be recognized as a group particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. They should have access to a tailored package of services that will promote, among other, access to quality housing, income support, education and vocational training, child care services.

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- The research presented in this paper is a result of a project coordinated by the Legal Informational Centre for NGOs Slovenia-PIC ([www.pic.si/](http://www.pic.si/)) Slovenia, in partnership with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) entitled “REACT to Domestic Violence: Building a Support System for Victims of Domestic Violence”, (<http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/news/react-to-domestic-violence-building-a-support-system-for-victims-of-domestic-violence/>) and was funded by the European Commission Daphne III Program. The project’s main aim was to raise awareness, knowledge and sensitivity among legal practitioners, judges and prosecutors involved in domestic violence as well as to increase the capacity of the NGO support system to effectively respond to victim’s needs.
- The results as well as the recommendations have been presented at the House Committee for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women.
- The themes addressed in this report include the examination of existing and planned policies; challenges relating to relevant legislation and policies and their implementation; views and attitudes regarding the situation of domestic violence in Cyprus; and, suggestions for the improvement of the existing victim support system as well as best practices in supporting and re-integrating women-victims of domestic violence.
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Alternative Food Systems: A Global Collaboration on Food Security and Food Sovereignty

by — Anna Cortesi

[Eng]

Agricultural development is growth or progress significant enough that it advances circumstances or events. In the case of sustainable development and alternative food systems it seeks global balance as a confluence of sound responsibility, economic development, and ecological care. Sustainable agriculture uses the relationships between organisms and their environment to create long-term results which satisfy our need for food while it also enhances the quality of the environment and agricultural economy.<sup>1</sup>

EACH NIGHT, ONE BILLION PEOPLE GO TO SLEEP HUNGRY.<sup>2</sup>

This is not the result of inadequate amounts of food, but rather a broken food production system. Nearly 80% of world hunger is caused by improper food production.<sup>3</sup> This situation could be rectified with the incorporation of sustainable agriculture and alternative food systems as key elements of rural and peri-urban development at global level and as a possible answer to global challenges of food security, nutrition and food sovereignty.

Sustainable agriculture utilizes non-renewable resources and farm resources efficiently enough to sustain viability of farms while enhancing the quality of life. Sustainable agriculture is better for our health, the environment and the economy. With more people involved in sustainable agriculture and alternative food systems, the current threats to our food production including hunger, climate, and waste would quickly be resolved.<sup>4</sup>

Agricultural sustainability is best understood as an approach toward agriculture which utilizes the ecosystems already in existence.<sup>5</sup> An ecosystem is a whole community of organisms including plants, animals, as well as microbes, which work with their non-living components such as mineral soil, air, and water in a system which interacts for the benefit of all parties. These components are linked through energy flows as well as nutrient cycles. In any event, an ecosystem is referred to as a network of interactions between the aforementioned organisms and their environment. Ecosystems range in size and can comprise a small and

limited space or span the world.

The entire world is actually one large ecosystem.<sup>6</sup>

Ecosystems are controlled both through internal and external factors. External factors include climate. While ecosystems go through regular disturbances and recovery phases,

drastic changes in the environment can interfere with the natural ability of any ecosystem to recover.

Due to alterations in climate change, the average price of staple food items is projected to double by 2030.<sup>7</sup> High temperatures have caused staple food prices to increase internationally by 85% with a 30% reduction in food production.<sup>8</sup> Drought has caused a 20% drop in food production and monsoons have increased the price of staple foods around some areas of the world by 30%.<sup>9</sup>

Developing and industrialized countries alike waste inexcusable amounts of food and are responsible for wasting one third of the current food supply.<sup>10</sup>

With increased access to transportation, refrigeration, and adequate storage this would not be the case. Facts show that industrialized countries throw away one third of food which is produced.<sup>11</sup>

Recently, governments around the world have made cuts in agricultural aid of up to 50% for small-scale producers in spite of the fact that the majority of hunger in the world is directly associated with food production.<sup>12</sup> With increased access to farming resources, an additional 100-150 million people would have enough food to eat. By aiding small-scale production and sustainable agriculture, world hunger could be drastically reduced in only six years’ time.<sup>13</sup>

*Hungry for Rights – Global Learning from Local Solutions in Alternative Food Systems* is an action financially assisted by the European Commission (EuropeAid/131141/C/ACT/Multi) that focuses on Alternative Food Systems (AFSs) as a key element of rural and peri-urban development at global level and as a viable answer to global challenges of food security and food sovereignty. Head and applicant of this project, ACRA – *Cooperazione Rurale in Africa e America Latina*, aims at linking development education processes, experiential learning and the promotion of active citizenship as a contribution to *Millenium Development Goals’* challenges.

Specific attention will be awarded to raising awareness for the fight against

poverty and hunger in the framework of a global citizenship approach. Last but not least, it contributes to mobilizing greater public support for the right to food and sustainability and engaging civil society in bringing its voice towards Universal Exposition “*Feeding the planet, Energy for Life*” (EXPO 2015).<sup>14</sup>

The *Hungry for Rights* action addresses smallholder farmers, consumer/ethical purchase groups, NGOs, Civic Associations, youth and religious organizations, local authorities and migrants’ organizations. Partners in this project include *Mani Tese – Italy, Fondazione Legambiente Innovazione – Italy, Reseau International URGENCI – France, Friends of the Earth – Cyprus, the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) – UK, the Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF) – Lithuania, Federation of Senegalese ONG – FONGS – Senegal.*

The Cypriot participation in this project, *Friends of the Earth Cyprus* (NGO), will be given the opportunity, with all the other international catalysts, to improve their skills and knowledge on the issues addressed by the project as well as to ensure a deeper methodological and overall coherence of the action at EU level. People across the globe concerned about Alternative Food Systems and Sustainable Agriculture will be able to attend local activation meetings, international, local-sharing and mutual-learning workshops and exchange visits on food governance issues. Candidates will also actively participate in web-based, knowledge-sharing platforms and the institutional and operational activation of food councils in Italy, France, Cyprus, UK, Lithuania and Senegal.<sup>15</sup>

This is a chance for the Cypriot agriculture and rural development to be supported and recognized by charitable services provided by promoting the transition from the intensification of agricultural production in a truly sustainable agriculture through the following principles and measures:

a. Supporting small farmers and rural communities by creating comprehensive policies on land management and rural development to support small farmers and promote the long term conservation of the productive capacity of agricultural land.

b. Establishing minimum environmental standards for the entire agriculture through proper compliance, the “greening” of direct subsidies and promoting sustainable production methods; a rational use of subsidies could strengthen the role of ecosystems, providing significant



benefits to farmers and society in general.

c. Recognizing the multifunctional role of agriculture, rewarding farmers who provide these public goods, depending on the size of their bid, supporting sustainable agriculture and providing support for compliance of farmers with management plans for NATURA 2000 sites and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive<sup>16, 17</sup>

The wider framework of the *Hungry for Rights* action includes the on-going debate over mid- and long-term global social changes linked to the food governance crisis. Furthermore, it focuses on local food production and consumption models parallel to the *Millennium Development Goals* – fighting hunger, reducing child mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability and building a global partnership for development.<sup>18</sup>

By increasing governmental aid to sustainable agriculture and alternative food systems, the current negative impacts of climate change would be reduced, while such future impacts could be prevented. Food waste in industrialized and developing communities would be halted and better food production could reduce the number of hungry people in the world.<sup>19</sup>

CONSEQUENTLY, BY INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS, THE WORLD WOULD BE A ‘BETTER PLACE’, ONE WHERE THE QUALITY SCALES OF ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WOULD WEIGH IN THEIR FAVOUR.

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FOOTNOTES

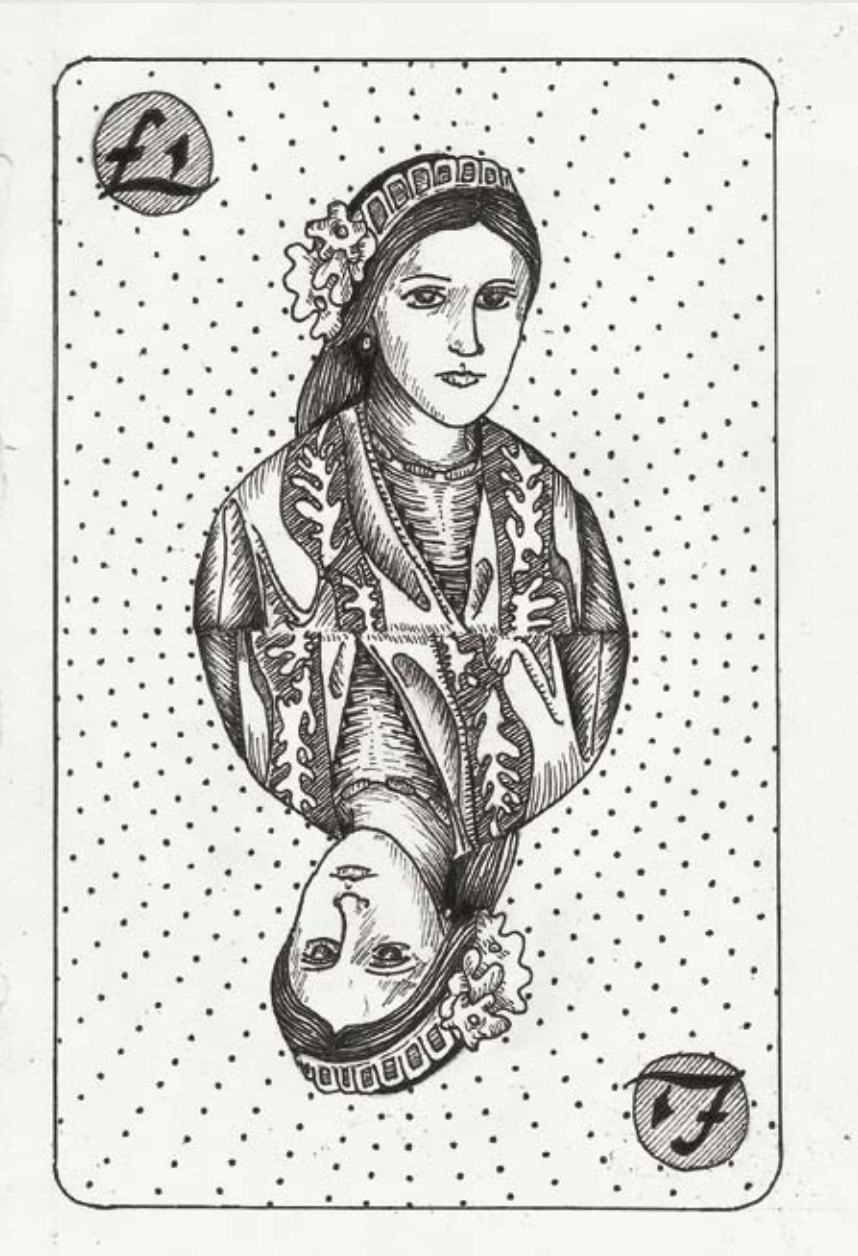
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Anna Cortesi holds a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition and a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics, Food Design and Technology. Anna's major research interests revolve around Food Sovereignty and, more specifically, on Sustainable Agriculture, Genetically Modified Crops, Ethical/ Sustainable Eating and Clinical Nutrition. She currently works for Friends of the Earth Cyprus as a Food Sovereignty Coordinator, and National Focal Point of the Hungry for Rights project funded by the European Commission.

Game of Cards?

by — Lefki Savvidou



LEFKI SAVVIDOU

Lefki Savvidou is a freelance illustrator and image-maker from Cyprus currently based in London. She graduated from Middlesex University in 2012 with a degree in BA Illustration. Lefki's work can be recognised by her black and white style usually consisting of thin lines. She uses traditional mediums such as ink, pencil and fineliners while trying to avoid any association with technology. Inspired by Victorian illustrations, she creates work by transferring images of the brain onto paper. Lefki has done work for the State General Laboratory (SGL) of Cyprus, the branding of “Souvlaki O Mormolis” the first and only pop-up Greek souvlaki in London town and the branding for “Souvenir Concept Store”.

lefkisillustrations.blogspot.co.uk

Epilogue:  
Taksim is a puppy dog.

by — Eleni Christou

[Eng]

I met Taksim while walking with a friend through my inner Sydney neighbourhood. Spotting a stranger approaching us with a young puppy, I enthusiastically commented on his pet. The stranger, delighted by our interest, stopped and we chatted. While playing with the puppy, I asked the man the name of the dog.

“Taksim” he replied.

Simultaneously surprised and amused, I laughed and responded: “Taksim means division in Turkish”.

He answered: “Really? I didn’t know that... My partner and I named him after Taksim Square in Istanbul. It is our favourite place in the world... it attracts so many different types of people”.

Later, reflecting on the encounter, it reminded me of our distinct, yet diverse relationship with words. Words are subjective. Like places and objects, we symbolically attribute new definitions to words based on our knowledge, experiences and memories. Because like humans, language is constantly evolving, changing meaning like we shed skin.

Words are perhaps our most malleable weapon, illustrated through their ability to adapt to various events and situations. The true power of words lies within us, not to dictate meaning, but invent, share and embrace new definitions. Previously for me, the word Taksim conjured a memory of walking past a football field in Nicosia of the same name, while a friend explained its historical significance. Taksim is a place where a stranger approached, and confided in me; his nostalgia for the past and hopes for a borderless Cyprus. Taksim is a Turkish word and a partition strategy. Taksim is a cosmopolitan space in Istanbul with a complex history. Now, for me, Taksim is also a four month old Dachshund.

Before going our separate ways, the stranger said to me:

“But now I like the name Taksim even more... ‘Divided’ suits him”.

ELENI CHRISTOU

Eleni Christou was born in London in 1985 and spent her childhood living between Australia and Cyprus. She has a Bachelor of Arts with an Anthropology major and is currently completing a Master’s of Applied Anthropology at Macquarie University in Sydney. Her research interests include identity, ethnicity, consumption and public space engagement. Professionally, Eleni has worked in various project management and research consultancy roles in the arts, media and social research.

Colophon

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Next issue: A NEW DAY IN CYPRUS

Back cover image

Performative Praxis

by — Nayia Savva & Theodoulos Polyviou

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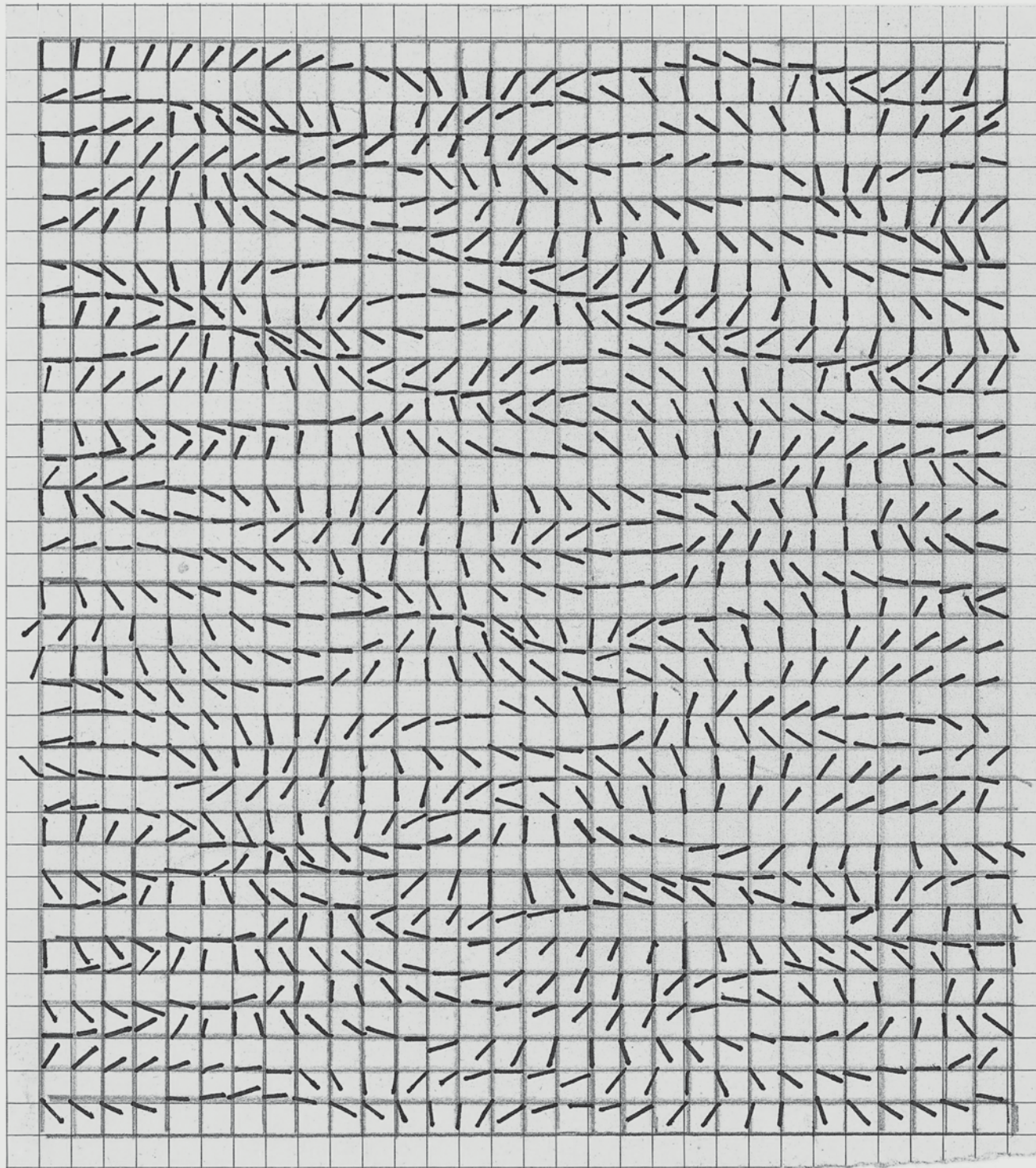
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An input

A systematic order  
A whole conformity  
A methodological  
A sequential  
synthesis  
A performative  
A method of functioning  
A complex formation  
A calibration of the normative

A formula

An action of aggregation

A fragmented manifestation of progression  
A continual codification  
An arranged representation of a  
A series of consistent

praxis

homogenous isotropic space  
detached actions

A numerical oddness  
A numerical evenness  
A numerical oddness  
A numerical evenness  
structure

An embodiment of totality  
A device of destruction

An alteration in magnitude and direction  
An alternation in magnitude and direction

A device of development  
A composition of movement  
A mold of interconnection succession  
and reconfiguration

A hypothetical organism

A linkage of form  
A harmonious coordinated method  
A collective entity  
A group of interactive bodies  
A cosmos

A proposition  
A blueprint  
A machine

An output